THE USE OF DIGITAL STORYTELLING TO IMPROVE ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING STUDENTS' ORAL PROFICIENCY

Abdullatif UYUMAZ

Master's Thesis
Assist. Prof. Dr. İsmail AVCU
Assist. Prof. Dr. Bilal KARACA
Department of English Language and Literature
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ATATURK UNIVERSITY

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE DEPARTMENT

Abdullatif UYUMAZ

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ADVISORS

Assist. Prof. Dr. İsmail AVCU

Assist. Prof. Dr. Bilal KARACA

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TEZ BEYAN FORMU

SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ MÜDÜRLÜĞÜNE

BİLDİRİM

Atatürk Üniversitesi Lisansüstü Eğitim ve Öğretim Uygulama Esaslarının ilgili maddelerine göre hazırlamış olduğum **"The Use of Digital Storytelling to Improve English Language Teaching Sudent's Oral Proficiency"** adlı tezin/raporun tamamen kendi çalışmam olduğunu ve her alıntıya kaynak gösterdiğimi taahhüt eder, tezimin/raporumun kâğıt ve elektronik kopyalarının aşağıda belirttiğim koşullarda saklanmasına izin verdiğimi onaylarım.

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[4.8.2022]

[Abdullatif UYUMAZ]

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TEZ KABUL TUTANAĞI

SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ MÜDÜRLÜĞÜNE

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Başkan: Dr. Öğr. Üyesi İsmail AVCU	İmza:	Aslı Islak İmzalıdır
Jüri Üyesi : Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Bilal KARACA	İmza:	Aslı Islak İmzalıdır
Jüri Üyesi : Doç. Dr. Savaş YEŞİLYURT	İmza:	Aslı Islak İmzalıdır
Jüri Üyesi: Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Serap ATASEVER BELLİ	İmza:	Aslı Islak İmzalıdır
Jüri Üyesi: Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Oktay AKARSU	İmza:	Aslı Islak İmzalıdır

Prof. Dr. Sait UYLAŞ
Enstitü Müdürü
Aslı Islak İmzalıdır

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

MASTER THESIS

THE USE OF DIGITAL STORYTELLING TO IMPROVE ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING STUDENTS' ORAL PROFICIENCY

Abdullatif UYUMAZ

Supervisor: Assist. Prof. Dr. İsmail AVCU
Co-Supervisor: Assist. Prof. Dr. Bilal KARACA

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Jury: Assist. Prof. Dr. İsmail AVCU (Supervisor)
Assist. Prof. Dr. Bilal KARACA
Assoc. Prof. Dr. Savaş YEŞİLYURT
Assist. Prof. Dr. Oktay AKARSU
Assist. Prof. Dr. Serap ATASEVER BELLİ

Storytelling is one of the oldest teaching techniques, dating back to prehistoric times. In addition to conveying culture, values, and knowledge, storytelling is also useful in developing language skills. However, with the advancement of technology, traditional storytelling has been updated as digital storytelling. Digital storytelling, which includes text, images, audio, music, and video, has been studied as a tool to enhance oral and speaking skills in foreign language learning and to increase learners' motivation, autonomy, and engagement. In this sense, the present study aims to determine the effects of the digital storytelling technique on ELT students' oral proficiency and get their opinions about integrating digital storytelling into language classrooms.

The fact that technological tools have features such as facilitating information acquisition and increasing student motivation has made the integration of these tools into the learning-teaching process almost a necessity in recent years. In this context, digital storytelling has become one of the most enjoyable and edutainment technological tools that allow learners to tell their stories with what they feel, imagine, think and choose.

The effects and efficiency of the digital storytelling method have been researched by many researchers (Adıgüzel & Kumkale, 2018; Akdoğan, 2020; Balaman Uçar, 2016; Araya, 2020; Castañeda, 2013; Dong, 2015; Mirza, 2020; Esen, 2019) and they mosttly found that digital storytelling have positive effects on students' motivation, language skills, achievement and literacy skills. Using the Digital Storytelling Technique in

language classrooms can help teachers make their lessons more engaging and improve students' language skills. When the relevant literature is examined, it is seen that the studies on Digital Storytelling Technique mostly focus on reading and writing skills related to language skills, and there are few studies investigating the effects of Digital Storytelling Technique on speaking skills (Öz,2019).Therefore, it is crucial to focus on speaking skills to clearly understand the potential benefits of introducing Digital Storytelling Technique as a pedagogical tool in language classrooms.

The present study will provide both quantitative and qualitative data, which shed light on the use of the DST to promote ELT students' oral proficiency and their views about the implementation of the technique in language classrooms. The study aims to examine the DST as a solution for students' limited possibilities to strengthen their communication and speaking skills for developing real-world contacts. Therefore, the results of the study can provide valuable information to various stakeholders of education such as teachers, students, and curriculum designers in terms of the integration of the DST practices into the teaching-learning process. Additionally, there is a limited number of studies (Abdolmanafi-Rokni & Qarajeh, 2014; Tahriri et al. 2015; Piray Lema, 2018; Esen, 2019; Zamzam, 2020) that examine the use of the DST applications at the higher education level students' speaking skills. In this respect, the results of this study are significant in understanding the effectiveness of using this technique on ELT undergraduate-level students' oral proficiency and the practicality of the technique in language classrooms from point of view of the ELT undergraduate students.

The study was conducted with 42 English Language Teaching undergraduate students at a state university. In accordance with the purpose of the research, a quasi-experimental mixed method research design was adopted. Students were homogeneously divided into experimental (21) and control (21) groups according to their pre-test scores. Then, the students in the experimental group were asked to prepare 8 digital stories in a 12-week period, and the students in the control group were asked to follow the usual process in the curriculum. At the end of the period, a post-test was applied to both groups and an interview with five questions was conducted to get the opinions of the students in the experimental group on the use of digital storytelling in language classes.

Levene Homogeneity test, Shapiro-Wilks Normality test, t-test and two-factor ANOVA were performed to analyze the quantitative data of the study. The quantitative findings of the study showed that speaking skills such as pronunciation, fluency, grammatical range and accuracy and vocabulary of the students in the experimental group improved statistically significantly compared to the students in the control group. On the other hand, The qualitative data of this study consists of the responses of 21 participant students in the experimental group to semi-structured interview questions. Each interview was between 15 and 30 minutes long. To analyze them, all interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed. Student opinions were gathered through these interviews and analyzed by implementing content analysis. In this framework, themes were created and tabulated for each question asked in the interview. Then, these themes were explained one by one with reference to participant views.

The results obtained from the interviews with the students in the experimental group revealed that the DST provides positive contributions to language skills, digital skills, motivation, and comprehension ability. Most participants who participated in the interviews stated that the DST improved their language skills. They also stated the challenges they encountered during the process. The answers obtained from the questions asked about the application of the Digital Storytelling Technique in language classes revealed that the technique had positive effects on language skills and revealed that it was an entertaining activity, as well as making positive contributions to speaking skills such as pronunciation, fluency, vocabulary, grammar and intonation. The students' responses to the question on the use of the DST in the educational process revealed that they had some challenges while creating digital stories. The difficulties students faced were: finding appropriate images or music, editing the videos, summarising short stories to retell, finding a quiet place to record voice, and text writing about personal stories. Another important piece of information obtained from the interviews with the participants was their answers to the question of whether they would use this technique in the future. While the majority of the participants (61.90%) stated that they would like to use the technique in the future, only 1 participant (4.76%) expressed a negative opinion on this issue.

This research extends our knowledge of the process of the integration of digital storytelling into English language teaching environments at the university level. At this

point, teachers and students must make the most of technology resources today because teaching-learning activities are becoming increasingly active in the digital world. The DST is a popular tool that can contribute to teachers and students in this context. Moreover, students, pre-service teachers, and instructors can benefit from using the DST technique to obtain such 21st-century skills as critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, communication, media literacy, technology literacy, and social skills.

The evidence from this study suggests that the DST technique may contribute significantly to the creation of a more productive and interactive environment in language classrooms. The DST not only helps students improve their language skills and motivation but also fosters self-confidence and freedom of expression. Therefore, it can be considered as an effective tool that can be utilized to ensure the active participation of students in language learning processes.

Keywords: Storytelling, Digital Storytelling, Speaking Skills, Oral proficiency, ELT Students

GENİŞ ÖZET

YÜKSEK LİSANS TEZİ

İNGİLİZCE ÖĞRETMEN ADAYLARININ SÖZEL BECERİLERİNİ GELİŞTİRMEK İÇİN DİJİTAL HİKÂYE ANLATIMININ KULLANIMI

Abdullatif UYUMAZ

Tez Danışmanı: Dr. Öğr. Üyesi İsmail AVCU
Eş Danışman: Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Bilal KARACA

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Jüri: Dr. Öğr. Üyesi İsmail AVCU
Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Bilal KARACA
Doç. Dr. Savaş YEŞİLYURT
Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Oktay AKARSU
Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Serap ATASEVER BELLİ

Hikâye anlatımı, tarih öncesi çağlara kadar uzanan en eski öğretim tekniklerinden biridir. Hikâye anlatımı, kültürü, değerleri ve bilgiyi aktarma rolünün yanı sıra dil becerilerinin gelişmesinde de faydalıdır. Ancak teknolojinin ilerlemesiyle geleneksel hikâye yerini dijital hikâye anlatımına bırakmaya başladı. Metin, resim, ses, müzik ve videoyu içeren dijital hikâye anlatımı, yabancı dil öğreniminde sözlü ve konuşma becerilerini geliştirmek ve öğrencilerin motivasyonunu, özerkliğini ve katılımını artırmak için bir araç olarak incelenmiştir. Dolayısıyla, bu çalışma, dijital hikâye anlatımı tekniğinin İngilizce öğretimi öğrencilerinin sözlü yeterlilikleri üzerindeki etkilerini belirlemeyi ve dijital hikâye anlatımının dil sınıflarına entegrasyonu hakkında görüşlerini almayı amaçlamaktadır.

Teknolojik araçların bilgi edinmeyi kolaylaştırma ve öğrenci motivasyonunu artırma gibi özelliklere sahip olması, son yıllarda bu araçların öğrenme-öğretme sürecine entegrasyonunu adeta bir zorunluluk haline getirmiştir. Bu bağlamda dijital hikâye anlatımı, öğrenenlerin hikayelerini hissettikleri, hayal ettikleri, düşündükleri ve seçtikleri ile anlatabilmelerini sağlayan en eğlenceli ve eğitici teknolojik araçlardan biri haline gelmiştir.

Dijital öyküleme yönteminin etkileri ve verimliliği birçok araştırmacı tarafından araştırılmıştır (Adıgüzel ve Kumkale, 2018; Akdoğan, 2020; Balaman Uçar, 2016; Araya,

2020; Castañeda, 2013; Dong, 2015; Mirza, 2020; Esen, 2019) ve çoğunlukla dijital hikâye anlatımının öğrencilerin motivasyonu, dil becerileri, başarısı ve okuryazarlık becerileri üzerinde olumlu etkileri olduğunu bulmuşlardır. Dijital Hikâye Anlatma Tekniğinin dil sınıflarında kullanılması, öğretmenlerin derslerini daha ilgi çekici hale getirmelerine ve öğrencilerin dil becerilerini geliştirmelerine yardımcı olabilir. İlgili literatür incelendiğinde, Dijital Hikâye Anlatma Tekniği ile ilgili araştırmaların daha çok dil becerileri ile ilgili okuma ve yazma becerilerine odaklandığı ve Dijital Hikâye Anlatma Tekniğinin konuşma becerileri üzerindeki etkilerini araştıran az sayıda çalışmanın olduğu görülmektedir (Öz,2019). Bu nedenle, Dijital Hikâye Anlatma Tekniğini dil sınıflarında pedagojik bir araç olarak tanıtmanın potansiyel faydalarını açıkça anlamak için konuşma becerilerine odaklanmak çok önemlidir.

Bu çalışma, İngilizce Öğretimi öğrencilerinin sözlü yeterliliklerini geliştirmek için Dijital Hikâye Anlatma Tekniğinin kullanımına ve dil sınıflarında uygulanmasına ilişkin görüşlerine ışık tutan hem nicel hem de nitel veriler sağlamaktadır. Çalışma, gerçek dünya temaslarını geliştirmek için öğrencilerin iletişim ve konuşma becerilerini güçlendirmeye yönelik sınırlı olanaklarına bir çözüm olarak Dijital Hikâye Anlatma Tekniğini incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bu nedenle çalışmanın sonuçları, Dijital Hikâye Anlatma Tekniği uygulamalarının öğretme-öğrenme sürecine entegrasyonu açısından öğretmenler, öğrenciler ve program tasarımcıları gibi eğitimin çeşitli paydaşlarına değerli bilgiler sağlayabilir. Ayrıca, yükseköğretim düzeyindeki öğrencilerin konuşma becerilerinde Dijital Hikâye Anlatma Tekniği uygulamalarının kullanımını inceleyen sınırlı sayıda çalışma bulunmaktadır. Bu bağlamda, bu çalışmanın sonuçları, bu tekniği kullanmanın ELT lisans düzeyindeki öğrencilerin sözlü yeterlilikleri üzerindeki etkinliğini ve ELT lisans öğrencileri açısından tekniğin dil sınıflarında uygulanabilirliğini anlamada önemlidir.

Çalışma bir devlet üniversitesinde 42 İngilizce Öğretimi lisans öğrencisi ile gerçekleştirilmiştir. Araştırmanın amacına uygun olarak yarı deneysel karma yöntem araştırma deseni benimsenmiştir. Öğrenciler ön-test puanlarına göre homojen olarak deney (21) ve kontrol (21) gruplarına ayrılmıştır. Daha sonra deney grubundaki öğrencilerden 12 haftalık zaman diliminde 8 dijital hikâye hazırlamaları, kontrol grubundaki öğrencilerden ise müfredattaki olağan işleyişi takip etmeleri istenmiştir. Süre sonunda her iki gruba da son-test uygulanmış ve deney grubundaki öğrencilerin dijital

hikâye anlatımının dil sınıflarında kullanımına ilişkin görüşlerini almak için beş soruluk bir görüşme yapılmıştır.

Çalışmanın nicel verileri analiz etmek için Levene Homojenlik testi, Shapiro-Wilks Normallik testi, t-testi ve iki faktörlü ANOVA yapılmıştır. Araştırmanın nicel bulguları, deney grubundaki öğrencilerin telaffuz, akıcılık, dil bilgisinin doğru kullanımı ve kelime bilgisi gibi konuşma becerilerinin kontrol grubundaki öğlencilere nazaran istatiksel olarak anlamlı düzeyde geliştiğini göstermiştir. Öte yandan, bu araştırmanın nitel verileri, deney grubundaki 21 katılımcı öğrencinin yarı yapılandırılmış görüşme sorularına verdikleri yanıtlardan oluşmaktadır. Her görüşme 15 ila 30 dakika arasında sürmüştür. Analiz etmek için tüm görüşmeler kayıt altına alınmış ve yazıya dökülmüştür. Bu görüşmeler yoluyla öğrenci görüşleri toplanmış ve içerik analizi uygulanarak analiz edilmiştir. Bu çerçevede görüşmede sorulan her soru için temalar oluşturulmuştur. Daha sonra bu temalar katılımcı görüşlerinden hareketle tek tek açıklanmıştır.

Nitel verilerden elde edilen sonuçlar Dijital Hikâye Anlatma Tekniğinin dil sınıflarında kullanımı ile ilgili güçlü ve zayıf yönlerini ortaya koymuştur. Bu bağlamda, Dijital Hikâye Anlatma Tekniğinin dil yerliliğini geliştirme, dijital becerileri geliştirme, motivasyonu artırma, araştırma becerilerini geliştirme, öz güveni artırma, kavrayış ve kendi kendine öğrenme gibi güçlü yanları olduğu, ancak teknik problemlerle karşılaşıldığı ve tamamlaması zor bir süreç olması gibi zayıf noktalarının olduğu tespit edilmiştir.

Dijital Hikâye Anlatma Tekniğinin dil sınıflarında uygulanması ile ilgili olarak sorulan sorulardan elde edilen cevaplar tekniğin dil becerileri üzerine olumlu etkileri olduğunu ve eğlenceli bir aktivite olduğunu ortaya çıkarmasının yanı sıra telaffuz, akıcılık, kelime bilgisi, dil bilgisi ve vurgu gibi konuşma becerilerine olumlu katkılar sağladığını ortaya çıkarmıştır. Katılımcılar süreç boyunca karşılaştıkları zorlukları da dile getirmiştir. Bu zorluklar hikayelerle bağlantılı müzik ve resim bulma, videoyu düzenleme, hikayeleri anlatmak için özetleme, ses kaydı yapmak için sessiz bir alan bulamama, kişisel hikâye oluşturmada zorluk ve metin yazmada zorluk gibi sıralanmaktadır. Katılımcılarla yapılan görüşmelerden elde edilen önemli diğer bir bilgi ise onların bu tekniği ileride kullanıp kullanmayacağı ile ilgili soruya verdikleri cevaplar olmuştur. Katılımcıların büyük bir bölümü (%61,90) tekniği ileride kullanmak

istediklerini ifade ederken sadece 1 katılımcı (%4,76) bu konuda olumsuz görüş bildirmiştir.

Bu araştırma, dijital hikâye anlatımının üniversite düzeyinde İngilizce öğretim ortamlarına entegrasyon süreci hakkındaki bilgimizi genişletmektedir. Bu noktada, dijital dünyada öğretme-öğrenme etkinliklerinin giderek daha aktif hale geldiği günümüzde, öğretmenlerin ve öğrencilerin teknoloji kaynaklarından en iyi şekilde yararlanmaları gerekmektedir. Dijital Hikâye Anlatma Tekniği, bu bağlamda öğretmenlere ve öğrencilere katkı sağlayabilecek popüler bir araçtır. Ayrıca öğrenciler, öğretmen adayları ve eğitmenler, eleştirel düşünme, yaratıcılık, iş birliği, iletişim, medya okuryazarlığı, teknoloji okuryazarlığı ve sosyal beceriler gibi 21. yüzyıl becerilerini elde etmek için Dijital Hikâye Anlatma Tekniğini kullanmaktan yararlanabilirler.

Bu çalışmadan elde edilen veriler, Dijital Hikâye Anlatma tekniğinin dil sınıflarında daha üretken ve etkileşimli bir ortamın yaratılmasına önemli ölçüde katkıda bulunabileceğini göstermektedir. Dijital Hikâye Anlatma Tekniği, öğrencilerin yalnızca dil becerilerini ve motivasyonlarını geliştirmelerine yardımcı olmakla kalmaz, aynı zamanda özgüven ve ifade özgürlüğünü de destekler. Bu nedenle öğrencilerin dil öğrenme süreçlerine aktif katılımını sağlamak için kullanılabilecek etkili bir araç olarak değerlendirilebilir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Öykü Anlatma, Dijital Öykü Anlatma, Konuşma Becerileri, Sözlü yeterlilik, İngilizce Öğretimi Öğrencileri

ABBREVIATIONS

CDS **:** Center for Digital Storytelling

DST **:** Digital Storytelling

EFL **:** English as a Foreign Language

ELT **:** English Language Teaching

ESL **:** English as a Second Language

L2 **:** Second Language/ Foreign Language

NLG **:** New London Group

TABLE LIST

FIGURE LIST

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INTRODUCTION

I. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

People live and experience many things from birth to death, and all of these are called life stories. So, stories and storytelling have found an invaluable place in individuals' lives since they play an essential role in telling human life and understanding it. There is always a story that a teacher or parent told us at some point in our lives that we cannot forget. In this regard, such a strong effect of storytelling arises from the power of stories. On this point, Eck (2006) establishes a connection between storytelling and brain activity by stating that the "brain is wired to organize, retain and access information through a story and that every relationship, experience, and object is recorded in the mind as a story" (pp. 10-11). In addition, especially in oral culture, storytelling is a very effective way of coding knowledge, making knowledge memorable and transmissive (Eck, 2006). Besides its effect on retention, storytelling's entertaining and engaging elements have made it an integral component of education for centuries. Mello (2001) asserts that "storytelling is the oldest known instructional method in existence" (p. 20).

Similarly, Lucarevschi (2016) states that "storytelling is one of the oldest forms of human communication, being used for entertainment, and the promotion of education and cultural values" (p.24). The relevance of digital storytelling as a strategy in the teaching context is best emphasized in language learning environments. In this sense, it has been underscored that storytelling is proved to be an effective tool in teaching and learning a foreign or second language (L2) irrespective of learners' age or background (Cameron, 2001; Isbell et al., 2004).

According to Coulson (2020), stories can keep the interest of learners alive and pave the way for students to listen to a kind of extended and cohesive talk or discourse. Still, it is not sufficient for students to produce extended discourses only by being exposed to stories. Students should tell or retell stories to be able to produce longer and more meaningful speeches. In this sense, Coulson (2020) argues that "in order to move our students beyond words and sentences, we need to expose them to longer and longer stretches of connected speech and have them participate in this type of talk as well" (p. 44.)

In the light of studies conducted on the effectiveness of stories and storytelling, it can be argued that the role of stories and storytelling as a pedagogical tool in education is of high importance (Mello, 2001; Rossiter, 2002; Heo, 2004; Anderson, 2010; Kim, 2010). At that point, Mello (2001) argued that the practice of storytelling and the accompanying listening process provides one of the most efficient and cost-effective teaching tools. Likewise, Kim (2010) asserted that the act of storytelling helps language learners improve their language proficiency at a significant level when they have positive attitudes towards storytelling. Additionally, the practice of storytelling can engage learners in gaining positive attitudes toward language learning and help them make sense of the teaching-learning environment (Heo, 2004; Yan & Zha,o 2019).

Even though the method of storytelling goes back to ancient times (Mello, 2001), it remains relevant in the educational sphere by keeping pace with changes in the world of technology. Over the past twenty years, technology has changed the way of functioning of almost everything in the world. Such impacts have greatly affected various disciplines such as communication, transportation, and education.

The role of technology in education is getting more significant day by day. Unequivocally, the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic around the world has made the integration of technology in education an obligation. As a result of the pandemic, a technology-oriented classroom environment that consists of the internet, laptop, software, mobile phones, etc., has become an integral part of education. Although the pandemic is a dramatic experience for all the people around the world, it has led to a kind of awareness regarding the importance of technology as a tool of education. All facilities of educational settings were suddenly moved to digital media, and this sudden change has caught many educators unprepared. Considering this situation, it is very important for 21st-century teachers to be familiar with technological developments in education and to acquire practical information about different approaches and strategies for integrating technology into education. According to Hicks (2011), most of today's educators had not been in a technology-integrated education environment when they were in school. At that time, schools did not have internet access, smart boards, e-mails, or technological tools to enrich their educational experience. However, technology is everywhere now, and schools have undergone drastic changes due to technological advancement. In addition, most of today's students were born into a world of technology, and they are tech-savvy

(Hicks, 2011). So, a teacher must be competent in terms of using and integrating technology in the educational setting to meet the needs of "digital natives" (Prensky,2001) learners (Hicks, 2011). At this point, Prensky (2001) defines digital natives as "the native speakers of the digital language of computers, video games and the internet" (p.2).

Digital media tools and computers provide dynamic learning and teaching facilities for learners and teachers (Abdolmanafi-Rokni & Qarajeh, 2014). In this sense, digital storytelling is an efficient way that combines the old storytelling tradition with modern technologies. Robin (2008) defines digital storytelling (DST) as: "a technology application that is well-positioned to take advantage of user-contributed content and to help teachers overcome some of the obstacles to productively using technology in their classrooms" (p. 222). By creating digital stories, students can become creative and productive storytellers and digitally literate through the way they shape their stories which is "…selecting a topic, conducting some research, writing a script, and developing an interesting story" (Robin, 2008, p. 222). In creating digital stories, students can use different technological tools and software that are easily accessed and learned without requiring users to be professionals in the field (Öz, 2019).

Furthermore, the DST tasks enable students to improve their digital literacy since they should use different technological tools such as laptops, smartphones, tablets, etc., and various programs to combine images, narrative, music, and voice record, which are integral parts of digital stories (Castañeda, 2013; Robin, 2006; Robin, 2008). In addition to digital literacy, other literacies such as information literacy, visual literacy, technology literacy, and media literacy can also be developed or enhanced by students engaging in digital story tasks (Robin, 2006). According to Barret (2006), digital storytelling encompasses four student-centered learning strategies: "student engagement, reflection for deep learning, project-based learning, and the effective integration of technology into instruction" (P,1).

Both students and teachers need to be media creators in the technology era rather than consumers of it. In this regard, students can be motivated to produce digital media; learn and synthesize available information about the digital world, and work collaboratively through the digital story tasks. In other words, they can benefit from the

advantages of the digital storytelling technique by being active participants in technology-integrated instruction.

The DST technique's advantages are not limited to providing students with different kinds of literacies; they can also be significant in improving different language skills. There are many studies around the world which were conducted to reveal the effects of the DST on such language skills as writing, reading, listening, and speaking (Xu, Park, & Baek, 2011; Razmi, Pourali, & Nozad, 2014; Abdolmanafi-Rokni & Qarajeh, 2014; Çıralı Sarıca & Koçak Usluel, 2016; Özer, 2016; Hamdy, 2017; Adıgüzel & Kumkale, 2018; Akdoğan, 2020; Akdamar, 2021). Since the digital story creation process encompasses the four language skills, it is considered a highly effective tool for improving and enhancing these skills. The technique is effective in teaching and developing writing skills because its first step is to write down a well-organized script or a scenario (Banaszewski, 2005; Dogan, 2008). And therefore, the relationship between reading and writing might be seen as that of chicken and egg. Without sufficient reading, writing about a certain topic will be impossible. In this sense, reading is like chicken feed which turns into an egg, namely a written product, in the end. Since the four language skills are interrelated, the process helps learners develop their listening skills as well. Students become active listeners while recording their voices and develop their listening skills. Trying to prepare and use visual and audio content enhances the learning process and assists students in acquiring the language. Using technology to use the stories that children like to listen to over and over again in digital story format has a positive impact on the development of students' listening skills and attitudes (Verdugo & Belmonte, 2007). In addition, students develop a positive attitude towards listening skills as they will be willing to listen to the digital stories they have prepared and those shared by their friends and learn certain keywords and other words related to certain contexts thanks to different digital stories prepared on the same theme.

The use of pictures, photographs, and other visual aids, as well as sounds, voice recordings, and other audio, can motivate learners and help improve language learning for students in the 21st century. At this point, the use of the DST can contribute to the output of the acquired language. This output is possible through speaking and writing, which are called productive skills. Therefore, these two skills have a significant role in the self-expression of learners and in transferring and sharing the acquired knowledge.

Since it is very challenging to plan and conduct procedures that engage students to talk (Ur, 2012), such a technological tool as digital storytelling can help teachers and learners to be more active in the sense of productivity in the language classrooms. Admittedly, the act of speaking, as opposed to reading, writing, or listening, entails simultaneous exposure to a particular audience. Therefore, students are sometimes hesitant to talk in a foreign language in the classroom because they are afraid of making mistakes, receiving negative comments, appearing foolish, or simply because of their shyness to speaking in public (Ur, 2012). However, the more foreign language learners' speaking abilities grow, the more at ease they will be in the classroom and the better their communication with their peers will be. In this regard, the DST technique is very practical and motivating in improving the speaking skill of L2 learners. (Abdolmanafi-Rokni & Qarajeh, 2014; Kallinikou & Nicolaidou, 2019; Eissa, 2019). Throughout the creation process of digital stories, one of the most crucial steps is voice recording and covering, which makes the story personal and unique. The voice recording process allows students or storytellers to develop basic components of speaking skills such as pronunciation, grammar, tone of voice, stress, and intonation (Abdolmanafi-Rokni & Qarajeh, 2014; Dong, 2015; Mirza, 2020).

Since the integration of technology into the teaching and learning process of language is a prerequisite of the digital era, the utilization of digital tools, which can make learners social, creative, independent, and motivated, should be promoted. In this regard, this research aims to investigate the use and integration of the DST technique in language classrooms for undergraduate level English Language Teaching (ELT) students' oral proficiency at a state university and find out the students' views about the implementation of the technique in general. Thus, the study will provide important information about the effectiveness of the technique on different participant samples and shed light on the practicality of the DST in promoting speaking skills.

II. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The main objective of this study is to investigate the integration of digital storytelling into English language classrooms for undergraduate level English language learners in higher education to improve their speaking skills. The effects of digital storytelling on developing speaking skills are examined. In addition, this study also aims

to understand the opinions of undergraduate level ELT students related to the use of the DST in language classrooms.

III. STATEMENT OF RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Two questions made it possible to achieve the objective of the study.

RQ-1: How do Digital Storytelling tasks influence the students' oral proficiency?

RQ-2: What are the opinions of students on the use of Digital Storytelling in language classrooms?

IV. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The fact that technological tools have features such as facilitating the acquisition of knowledge and increasing student motivation has made the integration of these tools into the learning-teaching process almost a necessity in recent years. In this context, digital storytelling has become one of the most enjoyable and edutainment technological tools that allow learners to tell their stories with what they feel, imagine, think and choose.

Numerous researchers have investigated the effects and effectiveness of digital storytelling on students in primary school (Dayan & Girmen, 2018; Kirikci et al., 2020), students in secondary school (Adgüzel & Kumkale, 2018; Erolu & Okur, 2020), and EFL students in university (Dong, 2015; Balaman Ucar, 2016; Esen, 2019; Akdoğan, 2020; Araya, 2020). They have mostly found that digital storytelling has positive effects on students' motivation, language skills, success, and literacy skills. The use of the DST in language classrooms might benefit teachers to make their classes more engaging and help students improve their language skills. Analyzing the relevant literature, it is seen that research on the DST mostly focused on reading and writing skills concerning language skills, and few studies investigated the effects of the DST on speaking skills (Öz, 2019). Hence, it is crucial to concentrate on speaking skills to clearly understand the potential benefits of introducing the DST as a pedagogical tool in language classrooms. This research is different from other studies in terms of the participant group and the number of digital stories created by students. ELT undergraduate students were selected as the study group for this research. Moreover, during the 12-week research period, each student created eight digital stories.

The present study will provide both quantitative and qualitative data, which shed light on the use of the DST to promote ELT students' oral proficiency and their views about the implementation of the technique in language classrooms. The study aims to examine the DST as a solution for students' limited possibilities to strengthen their communication and speaking skills for developing real-world contacts. Therefore, the results of the study can provide valuable information to various stakeholders of education such as teachers, students, and curriculum designers in terms of the integration of the DST practices into the teaching-learning process. Additionally, there is a limited number of studies (Abdolmanafi-Rokni & Qarajeh, 2014; Tahriri et al. 2015; Piray Lema, 2018; Esen, 2019; Zamzam, 2020) that examine the use of the DST applications at the higher education level students' speaking skills. In this respect, the results of this study are significant in understanding the effectiveness of using this technique on ELT undergraduate-level students' oral proficiency and the practicality of the technique in language classrooms from point of view of the ELT undergraduate students.

CHAPTER ONE

LITERATURE REVIEW

1.1. STORIES AND STORYTELLING IN TEACHING-LEARNING

What makes an event, a place, a person, and an ism memorable or notable is probably the story behind it. Lambert (2013) asserts that human beings can make sense of the world through stories. We always tell stories to convey our messages, experiences, and knowledge to others throughout our daily routines. Therefore, it might be said that we are all constant storytellers. Stories have served as the messenger of knowledge from the very beginning of history since people could communicate (Bekar, 2019). Anderson (2010) notes that "storytelling has been a part of humanity since people were able to communicate and respond to the basic biological urge to explain, educate and enlighten" (p. 1). Wang and Zhan (2010) argue that before the emergence of a writing system, storytelling was a unique way through which mankind could transfer their beliefs, traditions, cultural aspects, and history to the next generations. It is not just a practice of oral tradition, but it also could be done through songs, cave images, poems, and traditional dances (Anderson, 2010). So, it can be understood that storytelling is a key element in the existence of civilization.

As it enables the transfer and retention of knowledge (Eck, 2006) and the comprehension of confusing concepts, storytelling is regarded not only as an effective educational tool but also as an enjoyable, powerful, and creative way to enhance teaching-learning (Wang & Zhan, 2010; Bekar, 2019). Since storytelling has a facilitating effect on educational practices, it has been an integral teaching activity. Therefore it might be considered one of the cornerstones of the teaching profession (Wang & Zhan, 2010). The idea is explained by Wang & Zhan as follows:

> By telling stories of what happens in the world, teachers expose learners to the existing world of knowledge where learners can learn, construct, and further develop their knowledge by organizing complex elements in a given context, and by reflecting on their learning processes and life experience (Wang & Zhan, 2010, p. 77).

We may conclude from this discussion that storytelling as an instructional technique regulates knowledge acquisition by providing students with a critical perspective. To sum up, stories have always been at the center of civilizations, and through the tradition of storytelling, the heritage of societies has been able to be passed on from one generation to another. Moreover, its role in constructing knowledge in our minds makes the storytelling tradition an integral part of the teaching-learning process.

1.2. THE CURRENT PLACE AND IMPORTANCE OF TECHNOLOGY IN EDUCATION

Especially in the last two decades, technological developments have greatly affected people's lives and lifestyles in many areas, from transportation to communication and from health to education. Therefore, it must be acknowledged that technology has become a fundamental feature of daily life due to its pervasiveness and its facilitating qualities. In this respect, the meaningful integration of technology into 21st-century classrooms has become inevitable because many students today were born into a world of technology (Hicks, 2011). They are very active and permanent users of technological tools, and thus the educational settings should be designed accordingly. By doing so, learners' autonomy and their active participation in classes might be ensured. In this regard, Prensky (2008) asserts that the old teacher-centered pedagogy should be replaced with a new approach in which students are able to teach themselves under the guidance of teachers. Prensky (2008) believes that teachers should not be just "telling," "talking," "lecturing," or "Sage on the stage." They should instead be intellectual guides who accept the new paradigm to develop a blend of student-centered learning, problem-based learning, and case-based learning through intellectual guidance. They also should benefit from the supportive role of technology in enhancing new paradigms in the classroom (Prensky, 2008).

In parallel with Prensky, Sadik (2008) argues that it is possible to effectively incorporate technology into the teaching-learning process by using a constructivist approach that encourages students to acquire the capacity to generate new knowledge, solve problems, and use creativity and critical thinking. Thus, the combination of technology with a constructivist pedagogical approach enables students to be more

engaged and productive throughout the teaching-learning process through the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) tools (Sadik, 2008).

The use of technology and ICT tools in education is so important that it cannot be overlooked while building a curriculum since they provide significant benefits to instructors, students, and administrators (Jhurree, 2005). Therefore, the existence of technology and ICT tools in 21st-century classrooms can be considered a necessity in part due to the digital age in which we live and in part due to remarkable events, such as the Covid-19 outbreak, that have occurred in the previous two years. During the days of lockdown in the pandemic, almost all countries around the world shifted from face-to-face education to online education, and those countries which have had a proper technological infrastructure were able to adapt to the new system quickly and easily.

One way or another, the pandemic and requirements of the digital era have shown that meaningful technology and ICT tools integration in education is a must because the proper integration of ICT tools in education can pave the way for students to promote their "decision-making, problem-solving, data processing skills, and communication capabilities" (Jhurree, 2005, p. 468). It also increases the efficiency of educational activities by saving instructors' and students' time.

In conclusion, integrating technology and ICT tools into education has various advantages. They provide students with a motivating learning environment; make the instruction more effective and less challenging; enable teachers and school administrators to perform their duties quickly and cost-effectively; help disadvantaged groups of students to access education; eliminate borders between people by allowing them to communicate regardless of where they are on the planet; support students to access education. (Jhurree, 2005). Therefore, the role of technology in the education sphere is very crucial, and its meaningful integration into the curriculum brings great advantages.

1.3. DIGITAL STORYTELLING

1.3.1. What is Digital Storytelling?

"We can live better as celebrated contributors" (Lambert, 2013, p. 27)

Although the DST technique seems to have appeared recently, its first emergence dates back to the 1990s when Loe Lambert and his collaborator, Dana Atchley, founded the Center for Digital Storytelling (CDS) in Berkeley, California. The center was a nonprofit community arts organization that had solo theatre performances in its background (Lambert, 2013). According to Lambert (2013), the emergence of the DST was built on a democratized culture that was a characteristic of 1960s folk music, reclaimed folk culture, and cultural activist traditions. According to Lambert (2013), the 1960s was a period when "the legacy of the era was felt in such fields as literature, theatre, education, social services, and many others" (p. 27). Then, with the emergence of digital technologies in the 1990s, the tradition of storytelling began to move into the digital environment. In 1994 Dana Atchley, Joe Lambert, and his wife Nina Mullen founded the San Francisco Digital Media Center after discovering people's interest in creating and sharing personal stories via new digital media technology (Storycenter, 2021). After a while, they designed a curriculum that paved the way for a community workshop called "digital storytelling." (Storycenter, 2021).

Lambert (2013) emphasizes that the year 2001 was a turning point for CDS in terms of its growth and being popular, thanks to their assistance in the launch of the British Broadcasting Corporation's "Capture Wales," a program led by Daniel Meadows, and Melbourne's Australian Centre for Moving Image project led by Helen Simondson, and the two projects formed their present-day works. After being a well-known organization, the interest in CDS works grew rapidly, and the DST started to find a place in the educational sphere, especially in K-12 or higher education, as well as in health and human services.

Since the DST is a tool of self-production and reflection for individuals, it allows us to express our stories free and contribute to the heritage of civilization. This new digital way of expression and sharing stories is defined by Dana Atchley as follows:

> Digital storytelling combines the best of two worlds; the "new world" of digitized video, photography, and art, and the "old world" of telling stories. This means the "old world" of PowerPoint slides filled with bullet point statements will be replaced by a "new world" of examples via stories, accompanied by evocative images and sounds. (Reynolds, 2011, p. 84).

The definition of Dana Atchley highlights the power of digital stories in combining elements of new technology and the tradition of storytelling. Digital stories, unlike

traditional stories, would be passed down the generations via technology and the internet rather than oral tradition. In this sense, Digital Storytelling Association describes the DST as:

> It is a modern expression of the ancient art of storytelling. Throughout history, storytelling has been used to share knowledge, wisdom, and values. Stories have taken many different forms. Stories have been adapted to each successive medium that has emerged, from the circle of the campfire to the silver screen, and now the computer screen (Digital Storytelling Association, 2002 as cited in Sadik, 2008, p.490).

With the sudden developments in technology and the boost in using computers, smartphones, and tablets to tell stories with the help of hardware and software systems, storytelling has turned into digital storytelling. Nowadays, many people create digital stories on different topics and share them through social networks. Robin (2008) argues that digital storytelling makes it possible for computer users to become creative storytellers by combining various multimedia, such as "computer-based graphics, recorded audio, computer-generated text, video clips, and music" (p.222). This can be achieved with the traditional way of "selecting a topic, conducting some research, writing a script, and developing an interesting story" (Robin, 2008, p.222). Similarly, Castañeda (2013) describes the DST as "the practice of combining multiple modes of technology, such as photographs, text, music, audio narration, and video clips, to produce a compelling, emotional, and in-depth story." (p. 45). As an approach to conveying culture, values, and knowledge, digital stories should be composed by having a framework and design.

2.3.2. Characteristics and Elements of Digital Storytelling

As a learning and teaching approach, digital storytelling contains some qualities that have been determined by CDS and some researchers who have investigated the DST technique. According to CDS, there are seven components of digital stories (Lambert, 2013, p. 37); they are:

Self Revelatory (Owning Your Insights): In this step, the author is supposed to be conscious of a new sensitivity that is being shared in the story, and whatever I told in the story should belong to the author's inner world and should be sincerely presented to the audience.

Personal or First Person Voice (Owning Your Emotions): The second step is a medium for the author to convey his or her emotion explicitly to create insight into the subject that has deep meaning for the author.

Lived Experience of the Author (Finding The Moment): What is expected to be done in this step is that the stories should be about an authentic experience of the author and contain episodes in which there is at least one event or moment changing, or shaping something in the life of the author.

Photos more than Moving Image (Seeing Your Story): In this step, it is very important to choose proper images which allow the audience to grasp the details that would be hard to understand or associate with the topic. In addition, the images should be still and small in number to create an unsophisticated visual pace. In this sense, the images play crucial roles for the sake of coherency throughout the story.

Soundtrack (Hearing Your Story): The recorded voice of the storyteller is the most significant thing to call a story a "digital story." Along with the voice of the storyteller, the music is also very important to convey true emotion and add meaning to the story.

Length and Design (Assembling Your Story): The desired thing in this step is that the story should be clear enough and of ideal length (two or three minutes) so that the audience can understand the plot and not get lost in the details.

Intention (Sharing Your Story): In this last step, the author needs to be clear enough in his purpose of sharing the story and determine the target audience.

Parallel with the seven steps of CDS, Angay-Crowder, Choi, and Yi (2013) determined ten steps by depending on the ideas of Robin (2008) and Bull and Kadjer (2004) for the creation of digital stories. These ten steps are as follows:

> (a)find your story; (b) map your story; (c) capture your audience's attention right away and keep it; (d) tell your story from your unique point of view; (e) use fresh and vivid language; (f) integrate emotions—yours and audience's; (g) use your own voice in the script and in the audio; (h) choose your images and sounds carefully; (i) be as brief as you can be; and (j) make sure your story has a good rhythm. (Angay-Crowder et al., 2013, p. 40).

Additionally, Robin (2006) compiled the elements of digital storytelling. In creating a purposeful digital story, these elements should be taken into consideration.

Table 1. The Seven Elements of Digital Storytelling (Robin, 2006, p. 710).

The Seven Elements of Digital Storytelling
1. **Point of View** – what is the perspective of the author?
2. **A Dramatic Question** – a question that will be answered by the end of the story.
3. **Emotional Content** – serious issues that speak to us in a personal and powerful way.
4. **The Gift of your Voice** – a way to personalize the story to help the audience understand the context.
5. **The Power of the Soundtrack** – music or other sounds that support the storyline.
6. **Economy** – simply put, using just enough content to tell the story without overloading the viewer with too much information.
7. **Pacing** – related to Economy, but specifically deals with how slowly or quickly the story progresses.

Although the number of steps for the creation of digital stories may vary, there is a consensus (Lambert, 2013; Robin, 2006; Angay-Crowder, et al., 2013) on what elements a good story should consist of. All elements mentioned above have critical importance in producing a meaningful digital story. Firstly, the storyteller should have a point of view in conveying the message of the story to the audience. Secondly, the story should raise a problem or question that will be resolved in the end. Thirdly, the events of the story should be given in an emotional context that can evoke some kinds of feelings in audiences. Then, the voice of the storyteller needs to be clear and understandable, which makes the story unique and personal. The music or the sounds that support the flow of the story should be in harmony with the voice of the storyteller.

Most importantly, the length of the story should be arranged so attentively that it should just contain necessary content and details to tell the story without overloading the audience with redundant information. Lastly, the rate of narration should be at a level that the audiences cannot miss or confuse the content of the story. When all these characteristics are organized harmoniously, then a unique digital story comes into existence.

1.3.3. Categories of Digital Storytelling

Digital stories are categorized into five groups by Lambert (2013), and three of these groups have sub-categories. These groups of categories and their explanation are shown in table 2.

Table 2. Categories of Digital Storytelling (Lambert, 2013)

<table>
<tr><th colspan="2">CATEGORIES OF DIGITAL STORYTELLING</th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">1. The Story About Someone Important</td></tr>
<tr><td>a-Character Stories: These kinds of stories are about relationships that the storyteller finds meaning in and wants to recall.</td><td>b-Memorial Stories: These are about beloved ones who passed away. They are categorized as the most painful stories to produce.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">2. The Story About an Event in My Life</td></tr>
<tr><td>a-Adventure Stories: They are about events or moments that are so vivid and interesting for the storyteller to happen during a journey or visit a place.</td><td>b-Accomplishment Stories: They are about achieving a goal like graduating from school, passing a difficult exam, winning a critical sporting event, or signing a major contract, etc.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">3. The Story About a Place in My Life: There are some places that we cannot forget because of the meaning they have for us. The stories in this category are about such places as a town, a home, a restaurant, a store, a park, a mountain, or a forest, or a bus station about which the storyteller has unforgettable memories.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">4. The Story About What I Do: These stories are about the storyteller’s professional career through which the background of the career is explicitly told.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">5. Other Personel Stories</td></tr>
<tr><td>a-Recovery Stories: The storytellers share their experience of overcoming a challenging event.</td><td>b-Love Stories: They are about different kinds of love such as romance, partnership, familial or fraternal love, etc.</td></tr>
<tr><td>c-Discovery Stories: These stories are means of expressing the detective spirit of storytellers; they can get great pleasure in showing how they uncover the facts to get the truth.</td><td>d- Dream Stories: They are about dreams that are full of insights about what motivates or scares the storytellers.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">e-Coming of Age Stories: They are mostly about the adolescence period and identity construction, but any stage in individuals’ lives has an impact on identity, so they are not limited to a certain stage.</td></tr>
</table>

Another categorization was made by Robin (2006); he divides the types of digital stories into three groups:

> 1) personal narratives-stories that contain accounts of significant incidents in one’s life; 2) historical documentaries-stories that examine dramatic events

> that help us understand the past, and 3) stories that inform or instruct the viewer on a particular concept or practice (Robin, 2006, p.711).

Through personal stories, students can tell many important events in their lives such as accomplishment stories, love stories, dream stories, failure stories, and so on. Historical stories, on the other hand, aid students in better understanding the past by requiring them to perform research throughout the production process and allowing them to compare and contrast past incidents. Lastly, the instructive or informative stories can be about many different content fields. These types of stories can be used by teachers to deliver knowledge to their pupils on a variety of topics, from math and science to art, technology, and medicine.

1.3.4. Approaches for the Creation of Digital Stories

Some common steps should be followed in the DST creation process. According to Robin (2006), there is a 12-step process that can be followed by students in the creation process of digital stories:

1. **Choose a Topic:** By considering the objective of the story, students determine their purpose of creating the digital story (inform, persuade, provoke, inquire) and audience.
2. **Conduct Research on the Topic:** Students conduct research by using online search engines and libraries to build a background for their stories
3. **Write the First Draft of the Script:** This step is necessary for audio narration, so students should express the purpose of the story explicitly and include an identifiable point of view
4. **Receive Feedback on the Script:** Students should share their script with others to get some feedback which might make their story clearer and more functional.
5. **Revise the Script:** Students can improve their scripts in light of their feedback.
6. **Find, Create and Add Images:** Students try to find appropriate images, photographs, drawings, charts, and more to compose their stories.
7. **Respect Copyrights:** Students should seek material that is either in the public domain or licensed under a Creative Commons license.
8. **Create a Storyboard:** The storyboard is a written or graphic representation of all the things students intend to include in their digital stories. Storyboards can

aid in the visualization of their stories before they are written, making it easier to make modifications or add additional content.

9. **Record Audio Narration:** Students should use high-quality microphones or a voice recording app.
10. **Add Background Music:** Students might add richness to the narration by using background music that is consistent with the topic of the narrative.
11. **Build the Digital Story:** Students should decide on software (Inshot, Imovie, Animoto, Animotica, Movie Maker, ZooBurst, StoryBird, etc.) to create their digital stories.
12. **Publish the Digital Story:** Students can share their digital stories on such digital platforms as YouTube, GoogleDrive, Microsoft OneDrive, Dropbox, etc.

Another approach for the creation of digital stories was put forward by Frazel (2010). She suggests a 3-steps approach for the creation of digital stories. The steps of this approach are namely, (1) preparation stage, (2) production stage, and (3) presentation stage. The content of this 3-step approach is visualized in table 3.

Table 3. Creating the Digital Story (Frazel, 2010).

Creating the Digital Story		
1. Preparation stage	**2. Production stage**	**3. Presentation stage**
• Determine the audience and how the story will be presented or published • Create a story map, timeline • Write script • Prepare narration • Create a formative assessment rubric	• Select or create music/sound effects • Select or create images, video • Create slides with slide show application • Apply slide transition special effects • Render into video file format • Conduct peer review • Archive on CD or DVD	• Play for the classroom • Post to the web

2.3.5. Educational Uses of Digital Storytelling

Since we live in a volatile world of science and technology, everything is in a circle of change, and as an integral part of the circle, education has also been affected by changes. Therefore, being up-to-date and keeping pace with technological developments must be maintained by teachers and curriculum designers. At this point, the DST emerges as a very useful and helpful tool both for teachers and students.

Robin (2006) argues that the DST may be utilized in a variety of ways in the classroom. When considering whether to employ this technology in the curriculum, one of the first decisions to make is that if teachers will develop the digital stories or make their students do it. In both cases, the DST provides instructors and learners with various advantages. To illustrate, instructors can make complex and difficult topics clearer and more understandable through the DST; they can capture students' attention and increase their motivation toward new ideas. On the other hand, when students create digital stories themselves, they can promote their communication skills by " learning to organize their ideas, ask questions, express opinions, and construct narratives" (Robin B. R., 2006, pp. 711-712). Robin compiled a set of learner characteristics and teaching strategies and explained how the DST enhances those characteristics.

Table 4. How Digital Storytelling Supports Learner Characteristics and Teaching Strategies (Robin, 2016, p. 21)

Learner Characteristic	**Teaching Strategy**	**How Digital Storytelling Supports This**
Technology savvy	Incorporate technology meaningfully into class activities and assignments.	Digital stories can be used as class activities and/or class assignments.
Relies on search engines for information	Provide assignments that allow students to use search engines, but also critically assess the information they find.	Search engines can be used to research digital story topics, locate images, music, video clips that can be included in the story.
Interested in multimedia	Include music, videos, and other media in assignments.	Digital stories contain a mix of music, video clips and other media.
Creates internet content	Allow students to contribute to websites, blogs, wikis, and create YouTube videos.	Digital stories can be uploaded to blogs, wikis, and other websites, including YouTube.
Learns by inductive discovery	Provide opportunities for students to be kinesthetic, experiential, hands-on learners.	Creating a digital story is a hands-on, experiential process.

Table 4. (Continue)

Learns by trial and error	Allow students to test their own strategies for solving problems and take control of their own learning.	Digital storytelling allows students to solve problems and take control of their own learning.
Short attention span	Let students use technology to move at their own pace.	Digital storytelling lets students use technology at their own pace.
Communicates visually	Allow students to use images, videos and other visual representations in assignments.	Digital stories contain a mix of images, video clips and other visual representations.
Emotionally open	Encourage personal interaction and opinion sharing.	Many of the most powerful digital stories include a personal point of view.
Feels pressure to succeed	Tap students' multiple intelligences and emphasize deep learning experiences and critical thinking.	Creating a digital story allows students to be creative and critically reflect on what they have learned.
Constantly seeks feedback	Tap students' multiple intelligences and emphasize deep learning experiences and critical thinking.	Incorporating peer feedback in the digital storytelling process gives students an opportunity to improve their work.

As seen in the table above, the DST combines different aspects of the teaching-learning process and enhances the learners' active participation and motivation in the process, which helps construct meaningful learning (Barret, 2006; Robin, 2006; Sadik, 2008). In the same vein, according to Barret, the DST encompasses four student-centered learning strategies: "student engagement, reflection for deep learning, project-based learning, and the effective integration of technology into instruction." (Barret, 2006). Additionally, Smeda, Dakich, and Sharda (2014) claimed that the DST is a powerful tool to convey instructional messages and create a more engaging and exciting learning environment. The study also demonstrates that, in addition to offering a constructivist learning environment, the DST has the capacity to raise student engagement and improve academic performance (Smeda et al., 2014).

1.3.6. Digital Storytelling and Literacy Skills

Rapid technological developments, which have paved the way for drastic changes in many aspects of life in the 21st century, have led to the emergence of a new language and some new discourses in various fields, from work-life to private life. Such new technologies as "iconographic, text, screen-based modes of interacting with automated

machinery" can be seen as the reason for the emergence of this new language (Cazden, Cope, Fairclough, & Gee, 1996, p. 66). New London Group (NLG, 1996) argues that people's identities have various layers that are in dynamic relation to one another since they are members of multiple lifeworlds at the same time, and there is no such thing as a single community; instead, they are members of various and overlapping communities, such as "work communities, interest and affiliation communities, ethnicity groups, sexual identity communities, and so on" (Cazden et al., 1996, p. 71). All these multiple communities, relationships, and technological developments brought about the reconstruction of literacy pedagogy which was defined by NLG as: " the multiplicity of communication channels and media, and the increasing saliency of cultural and linguistic diversity" (Cazden et al., 1996, p. 63).

Since the DST process is a good example of "multiliteracy" pedagogy (Castañeda, 2013), the implementation of the technique can enhance the ability of students to adopt 21st-century skills. To meet the demands of the information age, teachers need to integrate technology into the curriculum to ensure that students adapt such 21st-century skills as critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, communication, media literacy, technology literacy, flexibility, and productivity. The DST provides students with a strong foundation in different kinds of literacy skills mentioned above (Brown, Bryan, & Brown, 2005; Robin, 2016). Robin (2006) explained these literacies as follows:

***Digital Literacy*:** The capacity to communicate with a growing community in order to discuss difficulties, obtain information, and seek assistance.

***Global Literacy*:** From a global viewpoint, the ability to read, comprehend, reply, and contextualize messages.

***Technology Literacy*:** The capacity to use computers and other technologies to enhance learning, efficiency, and performance.

Visual Literacy: The capacity to comprehend, create, and communicate via visual images.

Information Literacy: The capacity to collect, assess, and interpret data.

In the age of technology and information, students need to be able to have 21st-century literacy skills, and thus, creating digital stories plays a crucial role in improving

those skills. The creation process of digital stories encompasses several basic steps of combining different literacy skills such as “research skills, writing skills, organization skills, technology skills, presentation skills, interview skills, interpersonal skills, problem-solving skills, and assessment skills” (Robin, 2006, p. 713). All the skills mentioned above have tight relationships with digital storytelling, and students can develop these skills throughout the process. According to Robin (2006), when students are able to engage in the many stages of developing, creating, and presenting their own digital stories, they develop a wide range of literacy skills.

The DST technique has great potential in developing and enhancing skills that students need to have in today's technological world. Admittedly, it might be claimed that the more students engage in creating digital stories, the more they will become versatile learners. Thus, all those skills mentioned above have a crucial role in shaping the characteristics of 21st-century learners.

1.3.7. Digital Storytelling and Linguistic Skills

The DST is a preeminent technique both for teachers and students in terms of acquiring language skills (Banaszewski, 2005; Robin B. R., 2008; Castañeda, 2013; Razmi et al., 2014). According to Ohler (2013), digital stories are just the tip of the iceberg, below which several other aspects can be utilized to evaluate traditional literacy, such as “planning documents, scripted narratives, treatments, story tables, storyboards, and self-assessments, as well as music, art, recorded oral presentations and so on” (p. 12).

Most of today’s students are digital natives (Prensky, 2001), and they enhance their knowledge by integrating digital media tools into the learning process. In this sense, the DST is a powerful technique to back up such a learning environment in that it requires students to combine and “synthesize imagination, creativity, research, and critical thinking to form their ideas or thoughts through the media-based expression” (Ohler, 2013, p. 12). However, many of today’s instructors are “digital immigrants” (Prensky, 2001), and their approach to digital media tools might not meet the demands of digital natives; therefore, teachers must be competent technology users and tend to use and integrate technology and digital media tools into the teaching process. Yoon (2012, pp. 27-28) suggests that teachers should consider the ten principles for how digital

storytelling might help students learn in an ESL/EFL context before adopting and applying it in the classroom. In the light of these ten principles, digital stories are:

1. *Interactive:* Since they can share the digital stories, student(s)-student(s), student(s)-teacher, and the entire class-teacher may have continuous contact during the teaching-learning process
2. *Authentic:* Students can write and share a story that is personally relevant to them.
3. *Meaningful:* Students become more aware of their potential to convey a true story that engages the audience.
4. *Technological:* By using digital devices, students may gain experience and become more competent in the technical elements of creating their own stories.
5. *Organized:* Students can create, modify, and delete their digital stories with the use of digital gadgets.
6. *Productive:* Students develop their own voices and achieve their desired outcome through the arrangement of images, recorded narratives, and sounds that convey their intended message.
7. *Collaborative:* The digital story encourages students to collaborate as a team by allowing them to share their works with one another.
8. *Appealing:* More than any other component, the digital story offers the enjoyment of learning. Students are expected to have high levels of academic motivation, engagement, and achievement in order to continue their education.
9. *Motivating:* By raising motivation, digital stories enable students to personalize their learning experience.
10. *Personalized:* Students can tell stories ranging from personal experiences to any issue linked to their lives.

When all of the principles mentioned above are taken into consideration, it might be concluded that the use of the DST in the educational sphere provides instructors and learners with a lot of benefits. To illustrate, the DST has positive effects on English language learners' attitudes and helps them have a deeper understanding, increases students' motivation and interest, and provides confidence in learning English (Sadik, 2008; Yoon, 2012); the DST is very practical in teaching writing skills (Xu et al., 2011); it has significant impacts on students' reading and comprehension success (Adıgüzel &

Kumkale, 2018); it helps students develop reading skills and vocabulary (Akdoğan, 2020); it enhances students' vocabulary learning and retention (Özer, 2016); it promotes students' listening skills and motivation levels towards DST listening activities (Akdamar, 2021). To sum up, the DST technique is advantageous and applicable for language classrooms and has many positive effects on the four basic language skills.

1.3.8. Digital Storytelling and Speaking

Among four basic language skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing), speaking is probably the most important one because " people who know a language are referred to as 'speakers' of that language as if speaking included all other kinds of knowing" (Ur, 2012, p. 117). According to Ur (2012), a great number of language learners prioritize oral communication; therefore, it is crucial to teach speaking effectively in language classrooms in a way that learners can feel comfortable and confident. Teaching speaking in such a way might improve students' communicative competence and enable them to express themselves more clearly in different situations. What's more, the act of speaking is the foundation of all other forms of communication, and it is a talent that involves "creating, receiving, and processing information in order to produce meaning" (Eissa, 2019, p. 128). Language learners should combine such components as grammatical accuracy, lexical knowledge, pronunciation, and fluency to produce an effective and meaningful speech in the target language. In this sense, the DST provides many benefits for language learners to improve their speaking skills.

As mentioned before, the DST compasses some steps (voice-recording, script writing, pacing, etc.) which enhance learners' productive skills (Yoon, 2012; Abdolmanafi-Rokni & Qarajeh, 2014; Razmi et al., 2014; Kallinikou & Nicolaidou, 2019). Moreover, the studies about the use of the DST in language teaching revealed that the DST has a crucial role in developing language skills. Therefore, the studies which aim to explore the benefits of using the DST to promote learners' speaking skills show that the DST is an effective tool and contributes a lot to the development of speaking skills.

Kallinikou and Nicolaidou (2019) aimed to investigate the effectiveness of the DST on speaking skills and motivation of adult students who were learning Greek as a foreign language. The researchers used a pre-test and post-test control group design with two

groups of 20 students (28 male and 12 female) and a motivation questionnaire to collect data. The experimental group was exposed to 12 hours of the DST implementation which lasted for two months, while the control group received traditional instruction. The study results show that students in the experimental group made fewer mistakes in post-tests than those in the control group, which indicates that the DST has positive effects on learners' speaking skills and helps them improve their motivation to learn Greek.

Mirza (2020) conducted a study to investigate the effectiveness of the DST on EFL students' English proficiency at Lebanese University. The participants of the study were 20 second-year students. They were assigned to create digital stories and then upload them on the researcher's YouTube channel and share them on Facebook and WhatsApp. Data of the study was gathered through open-ended survey questions and analyzed using descriptive and analytical research methods. The results of the study showed that the majority of the participants found the process enjoyable and fruitful in terms of language learning and were eager to utilize the DST technique even though they encountered some technical difficulties. Many participants reported that they acquired self-confidence and improved their pronunciation, organizational, technical, and research skills.

Another study, which aimed to investigate the effectiveness of the DST on 40 first-semester students' speaking skills at Taduloka University, was conducted by Zamzam (2020). She utilized a quasi-experimental non-equivalent control group design. She divided the participants into two groups, an experimental and a control group, and applied pre-post tests to collect data. The duration of the study was 16 meetings, and the experimental group was asked to retell the story, which was introduced to them by their teacher in advance, and then they created digital stories by script writing, voice recording, using images and music. They also made comments on the digital stories their peers had created; thus, they could practice speaking activities. On the other hand, the control group received conventional education. At the end of the experiment, a post-test was applied, and the results show that the DST technique helps students improve their speaking skills and increase enthusiasm for speaking activities.

Abdolmanafi-Rokni and Qarajeh (2014) conducted a mixed-methods study to see how two different types of storytelling affect the speaking abilities of Iranian EFL students. In an educational context, a teacher or narrator performed the traditional method

of storytelling known as storytelling aloud, while the DST was implemented in the other context. Using both qualitative and quantitative methodologies, this mixed-method study examined the differences between the effects of digital storytelling and storytelling aloud on the speaking skills of Iranian EFL learners. The data was gathered from 42 students at Payam Noor University in Gorgan, Iran, who ranged in age from 19 to 25. A TOEFL speaking exam was given to students in two classes as a pre-test in this research. Then, for the next 12 sessions, one of the courses was treated as an experimental group consisting of 21 people who took part in a digital storytelling course. The typical storytelling training was given to the other class, which served as the control group. Both groups were given the identical TOEFL speaking exam at the end of the course. A questionnaire evaluating the impact of the digital storytelling course on their motivation to enhance their speaking skills was given to the experimental group in addition to the speaking exam. The data evaluated using SPSS software demonstrated that the DST could improve students' speaking skills much more than the traditional way of storytelling can do, and it was also found that students in the experimental group develop positive attitudes towards DST, and their speaking skills improved in particular. The study also shows that the DST enables students to develop a deep understanding in a short period.

Tahriri, Tous, & Solmaz (2015) carried out a study to see how the DST affected EFL learners' speaking abilities and their willingness to use the DST training. 30 intermediate EFL students were chosen at random from two groups (one control and one experimental) based on their performance on the Oxford Placement Test. Each group included 15 participants. To examine the participants' speaking abilities before and after the experiment, 3 instruments were used: listening and speaking tests as pre-post tests, as well as a motivation questionnaire. Analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) and multivariate analysis of covariance (MANCOVA) were used to examine the data. According to the study's findings, DST participants outscored the control group in terms of speaking skills and motivation. The findings also underlined the need of incorporating digital software into language training as a critical aspect of language teaching that should be included in EFL curricula.

Esen (2019) conducted a study that aimed to find out whether the DST activities could improve the learners' speaking abilities and had any effects on the attitudes of learners towards speaking. This quasi-experimental study examined the participants' and

teachers' attitudes towards DST as a technique to practice speaking. The participants of the study were 124 prep school students at a state university in Turkey. The data collection process lasted for 8 weeks, and students in the experimental group were asked to create two digital stories and present them in the classroom, while students in the control group did the usual speaking tasks in the school curriculum. Pre and post-tests, and a speaking attitude survey were used to collect data. Data analysis was done by using IBM Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Statistics version 25. The findings from the study revealed that the DST positively contributed to students' spoken performances, and students developed a more positive attitude towards speaking skills.

Piray Lema (2018) conducted a study to explore the impacts of the DST on 1st-year BGU students' speaking skills at Pcaihua High School in Ambato-Ecuador. The researcher selected 40 1st year high school students and divided them into two groups: experimental group A and control group B. The students in experimental group A received treatment with the DST and speaking activities, while control group B did not receive any treatment. The study lasted for five weeks, and data collection was done by pre and post-tests. The researcher used a speaking rubric to evaluate students' speaking skills, that is, rhythm, pronunciation, stress, intonation, accuracy, and fluency. Data obtained from the study were analyzed by the SPSS program, and it was revealed that there was a significant difference between post-test scores of experimental and control groups, which means the DST was effective on students' speaking skills. It was also found that students' critical thinking and creativity improved along with their pronunciation, fluency, and intonation.

Apart from the studies mentioned in detail above, there are some other studies (Yoon, 2014; Syafryadin, Haryani, Salniwati, & A.R.A.P, 2019; Araya, 2020;) that revealed similar results. The role of the DST in teaching and learning English seems advantageous in the light of the studies mentioned in the literature. In this study, we also tried to determine the effectiveness of the DST on undergraduate ELT students' speaking skill and their opinions about the use of the DST in language classrooms.

To sum up, in terms of methodology, there are some similarities between several studies (Sever, 2014; Tahriri et al., 2015; Bekar, 2019, Esen, 2019) in the literature and this one. However, the study group and the number of digital stories created by the

students differ from the majority of studies stated in the literature review section. Thus, this study provides a variety of opinions on the effectiveness of the digital storytelling technique in the teaching-learning environment.

CHAPTER TWO

METHODOLOGY

2.1. INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the research strategy utilized to collect data, the participants of the study, the tools used to collect data, and the method of how data was collected and analyzed are explicitly presented.

2.2. STATEMENT OF RESEARCH PURPOSE AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The primary goal of this research is to examine the impacts of the DST on undergraduate English language learners' speaking skills. Digital storytelling's effects on the development of speaking skills are investigated. Furthermore, the goal of this research is to learn about the perspectives of undergraduate ELT students on the use of the DST in language classrooms. In pursuing the purpose of the study, it was aimed to find answers to the research questions below.

RQ-1: How do Digital Storytelling tasks influence students' oral proficiency?

RQ-2: What are the opinions of students on the use of Digital Storytelling in language classrooms?

2.3. HYPOTHESIS

H_1: Digital Storytelling tasks improve the speaking skills of English language teaching students.

2.4. RESEARCH DESIGN

The purpose of this study is to reveal the effects of the DST on the speaking skills of ELT students and get their ideas about the integration of the DST into language classrooms. In line with this objective, a 12-week study was carried out. For the purpose of the study, it was crucial to choose the most suitable research method to measure the possible effects of treatment, the use of the DST, on participants speaking skills.

The first research question of the study necessitated a quantitative method to reach answers. Thus, an experimental design was adopted, in which the digital storytelling technique was applied as a treatment factor to an experiment group. Then, the results were compared to those of the control group who were not exposed to the treatment. According to Creswell (2012), in an experiment, the researcher "tests an idea (practice or procedure) to determine whether it influences an outcome or dependent variable" (p. 295). For this study, the independent variable is the use of digital storytelling tasks, while the dependent variable is the speaking skills of the participants and what is desired to be known in the study is the effects of the treatment, namely the DST tasks, on the dependent variable, speaking skills. That's why the experimental design is an appropriate method to achieve answers to the first question.

However, this study has quasi-experimental design qualities rather than those of a true experiment. Creswell (2012) makes a distinction between a true experiment and a quasi-experimental design by saying:

> A "true" experiment involves random assignment of participants to groups or units. This form of experiment is the most rigorous and controlled of all types. A quasi-experimental design involves the use of an intervention, but not random assignment of participants to groups (p. 326).

Accordingly, the participants of this study were not assigned to groups randomly; instead, they were selectively assigned to groups by depending on their pre-test scores to form two homogeneous groups, one experiment and one control group.

On the other hand, the second research question of the study required a qualitative research method to reach answers. Dörnyei (2007) defines qualitative research as " data collection procedures that result primarily in open-ended, non-numerical data which is then analyzed primarily by non-statistical methods. Typical example: interview research, with the transcribed recordings analyzed by qualitative content analysis" (p. 2). Content analysis is a method of determining the existence of specific words, themes, or concepts in qualitative data, and researchers can measure and evaluate the existence, meanings, and correlations of words, themes, and concepts by using content analysis (Creswell, 2012). In this study, semi-structured interviews were conducted face to face with 21 participants in the experiment group, and their views were transcribed, which provide insights into the use of the DST in language classrooms. Then, they were analyzed by

qualitative content analysis. To have more credible results, both quantitative and qualitative data collection procedures were applied. Accordingly, a triangulation method which is an essential construct in mixed methods studies (Creamer, 2018) was followed throughout the study to get more credible results. According to Creamer (2018), triangulation "involves corroboration or verification through multiple data points or multiple types of data about the same phenomenon" (p. 37). In this study, the verification of answers to research questions was tried to be done by conducting both quantitative and qualitative data sources and analysis.

Consequently, in this study, both quantitative and qualitative research approaches were employed; and thus, a mixed-methods research design was adopted. This kind of multimethodology "offers a logical ground, methodological flexibility, and an in-depth understanding of smaller cases" (Dawadi, Shrestha, & Giri, 2021). Accordingly, in this study, a mixed-methods approach was preferred for its advantages in enabling researchers to answer study questions with adequate depth and breadth and facilitating the generalization of research findings and their implications to the larger population. Therefore, the quantitative and qualitative data analysis results were merged with the purpose that data from different sources might expand, explain, and supplement each other.

2.5. PARTICIPANTS

The participants of the present study were 42 students from the two classes of the English Language Teaching department at a state university in Turkey. There were 25 female and 17 male students between 18-25 ages. These students, who are in the first year of the department, were given 28 hours of training per semester within the scope of the Reading Skills I course. During the course, different types of reading texts were discussed every week in accordance with the objectives of the university curriculum. This course was used to conduct the present study. Regardless of their previous years of learning English, by taking a pre-test measuring their speaking skills and levels at the beginning of the term, students were assigned to two classes, one of which was chosen as the experimental group and the other as the control group with 21 students for each group, respectively. They were not randomly assigned to the groups, which is a required quality of quasi-experimental design (Creswell, 2012, p. 310).

2.6. PROCEDURE

The present quasi-experimental mixed-methods study lasted for 12 weeks in total. In the first week, a pre-test was applied to the participants to determine their oral proficiency levels, and then they were assigned to the groups accordingly. Following the assignment of members to the experiment and the control groups, an online meeting was held with the participants of the experiment group, and the steps of digital story creation, programs for the creation of digital stories, including Movie Maker, InShot, Animotica, and categories of digital stories were introduced to them in the second week. In addition to this, they were assigned to prepare a demo digital story about *Seven Significant Female Characters in History* to practice the programs or software they had been taught. After they all prepared the demo digital story, for the first four weeks, they were assigned to retell four short stories in digital story format respectively; (1) *The Last Leaf* by O. Henry; (2) *The Happy Prince* by Oscar Wilde; (3) *The Handsomest Drowned Man in the World* by Gabriel Garcia Marquez; (4) *The Lottery* by Shirley Jackson. For the next four weeks, they were assigned to prepare different kinds of personal digital stories (The story about someone important, the story about a place in my life, dream stories, achievement stories, etc.) which are given in Table 2. For each assignment, they were given one week period to prepare the digital story and share it with the researcher via e-mail. Upon receiving the digital stories via e-mail, the researcher provided feedback to the participants about the content, grammar, and organization of the story, weekly. Following the digital story creation process, the post-test was applied to the participants, they were interviewed, and the data collection procedure was completed. The procedure is schematized in the table below.

Table 5. The Procedure of the Study

	Experiment Group	Control Group
1.Week	Pre-test	Pre-test
2.Week	Online meeting with experiment group and demo digital story assignment	Usual tasks in the curriculum
3.Week	Creating the digital story of *The Last Leaf*	Usual tasks in the curriculum
4.Week	Creating the digital story of *The Happy Prince*	Usual tasks in the curriculum
5.Week	Creating the digital story of *The Handsomest Drowned Man in the World*	Usual tasks in the curriculum
6.Week	Creating the digital story of *The Lottery*	Usual tasks in the curriculum
7.Week	The Story About Someone Important	Usual tasks in the curriculum
8.Week	The Story About an Event in My Life	Usual tasks in the curriculum
9.Week	The Story About a Place in My Life	Usual tasks in the curriculum
10.Week	Other Personel Stories in Table 2.	Usual tasks in the curriculum
11.Week	Post-test	Post-test
12.Week	Interview	-

2.7. DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS

2.7.1. Pre-test and Post-test

What is targeted in this study is to see whether the DST has any effects on the oral proficiency of ELT first-year students and to get their opinions about the integration of the DST into language classrooms. As mentioned above, this study's design is a quasi-experimental design with pre-test and post-test control groups. In compliance with the research design, the participants were divided into experiment and control groups

selectively depending on their pre-test scores. A pre-test enables researchers to measure some attributes or characteristics that are intended to be assessed in an experiment before the participants receive a treatment, and a post-test also functions in a similar way to a pre-test but after the participants receive a treatment (Creswell, 2012, p. 297). In the pre-test (Appendix A) and the post-test (Appendix B), an IELTS speaking test and an IELTS Speaking: band descriptors (Appendix C) were used by three raters to assess the students' performance of speaking skills. Assessment criteria are divided into four categories: fluency and coherence, lexical resource, grammatical range and accuracy, pronunciation, and across 9 bands. The scores of the band range from 0 (the lowest) to 9 (the highest).

Three lecturers who are experts in the field of English Language Teaching participated in the pre-tests carried out to measure the speaking levels of the students. One of the raters has 20 years of experience in English Language Teaching, the other has 10 years of experience, and the other has 7 years of experience. At the same time, one of the raters has a Ph.D. in English Language Education and the other in English Culture and Literature. To increase the reliability of the tests, a rubric with detailed scoring explanations was used. Before the real practice, the raters made a pilot application with 5 students outside the participant group of the study, and a high consistency was determined between the scores they gave to the participants. In the actual study, while each participant was tested individually, the conversations were recorded, and the raters gave grades for each participant according to the detailed scoring explanations in the rubric. At the end of the process, the raters compared the scores they gave to the candidates by explaining them to each other, and if there was more than two points difference between them, each rater listened to the recorded performances once again. In the 2nd round, if raters cannot reach a consensus by reviewing their scores, it was planned to make a 4th expert in the field of English language education, listen to the recordings, and make evaluations. However, it was seen that high consistency occurred in the majority of the points given by the raters to the students, and there were rare times that the raters felt the need to listen to the recordings for the second round.

2.7.2 Interview

According to Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009), an interview is a method of gathering information in which one person (the interviewer) asks another person questions (the

interviewee). Questions can be open-ended, closed-ended, or a combination of the two. Since they employ one-to-one interaction between researchers and participants, interviews are robust data collecting strategies. Similarly, Creswell (2012) proposes that interviews are useful and popular data collection tools in qualitative studies in which researchers "ask one or more participants general, open-ended questions and record their answers and then transcribes or types the data into a computer file for analysis" (p. 217). He also asserts that interviews provide important advantages in obtaining the participants' views or opinions about the treatment applied in the experiment. They intend to disclose the participants' thoughts, opinions, experiences, and cognitive processes through their expressions. Johnson and Christensen (2014) similarly explain that interviews are "used to obtain in-depth information about a participant's thoughts, believes, knowledge, reasoning, motivations, and reasoning about a topic" (p. 207).

Therefore, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the participant students to obtain rich and appropriate data to have an in-depth understanding of their perceptions about their experiences related to the digital story creation process. Thus, a five-question open-ended interview (Appendix D) was employed to get the opinions of the students about the integration of the DST into language classrooms in the experiment group and their overall view of the technique. During the preparation of the interview protocol, the researcher tried to include a range of questions that reflected the research questions and the objective of the study. The researcher aimed to ask precise interview questions with the potential to generate useful information pertinent to the specific study issues. On this basis, after a draft version was prepared, two lecturers who are experts in the field of English Language Education were consulted to provide feedback on the language, simplicity, and clarity of the interview questions and their usefulness in obtaining information along with the purpose of the study and the research questions, thereby increasing the content validity of the study. Finally, the students were asked about their views on the potential benefits of the DST in education in general and language education, their experiences while creating digital stories, the strong and weak aspects of integrating the DST practices into teaching, etc.

21 students took part in this part of the study, and all interviews were completed over the course of one week. Prior to the data collection process, the necessary consent was taken from the participants ensuring their confidentiality and anonymity. Each

interview lasted from 15 to 30 minutes. With participants' permission, all interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed into text shortly thereafter. To bolster the credibility of the findings, the researcher read them multiple times, coded the data, created margin notes, wrote memo notes, colored/highlighted recurring terms, labeled the codes, and then identified the themes.

2.8. DATA ANALYSIS

2.8.1 Quantitative Data analysis

The aim of this study is to determine the effects of the DST technique on ELT students' oral proficiency and get their opinions about the integration of the DST into language classrooms. In line with these purposes, a quasi-experimental mixed-methods study was conducted. Utilizing SPSS statistics software, the quantitative data were analyzed. For the normality and homogeneous distribution of the scores obtained from the study group, the Levene Homogeneity test was implemented; for the normal distribution of the data set, the Shapiro-Wilks Normality test was used; for determining whether there is a statistically significant difference between the scores of the two groups, the t-test was used; and for determining the difference in achievement scores between the two groups, the Two-Factor ANOVA test was used.

2.8.2. Qualitative Data Analysis

In this study, which was conducted to investigate the effects of the DST on improving the speaking skills of ELT students, qualitative and quantitative data were gathered to clarify the research problems. The qualitative data of this study consists of the responses of 21 participant students in the experimental group to semi-structured interview questions. Each interview was between 15 and 30 minutes long. To analyze them, all interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed. Student opinions were gathered through these interviews and analyzed by implementing content analysis. In this framework, themes were created and tabulated for each question asked in the interview. Then, these themes were explained one by one with reference to participant views. To prepare for analysis, all interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed. To enhance the credibility of the findings, the researcher reviewed them numerous times, coded the data,

generated margin notes and memos, colored /highlighted repeating terms, labeled the codes, and then identified the themes.

CHAPTER THREE

FINDINGS

3.1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to reveal the effects of the DST on the speaking skills of ELT students and get their ideas about the integration of the DST into language classrooms. In line with the purpose of the study, both quantitative and qualitative data were gathered to find answers to the research questions. For the first question of the study, "How do Digital Storytelling tasks influence students' oral proficiency?" quantitative data was gathered and analyzed. For the second question of the study, "What are the opinions of students on the use of Digital Storytelling in language classrooms?" qualitative data was gathered and analyzed. This chapter presents the quantitative and qualitative findings of the research.

3.2. QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS

The quantitative data, which was obtained from pre-test and post-test, were analyzed by SPSS statistical software. Firstly, in the data analysis process of the research, analyses were made about whether the scores obtained from the study group showed a normal and homogeneous distribution. For this purpose, one of the basic assumptions of parametric tests, homogeneity of variance and normally distributed data (Field, 2009), was tried to use parametric analyses, and the Levene Homogeneity test was utilized to determine whether there is a homogeneous distribution, and the results are shown in the table below.

Table 6. Levene Test Results Regarding the Scores of the Experimental and Control Groups

	Levene Statistic	sd1	sd2	Sig.
Pre-test Fluency & Coherence	,363	1	40	,550
Pre-test Lexical Resource	,000	1	40	,995
Pre-test Grammatical Range and Accuracy	,002	1	40	,962
Pre-test Pronunciation	,614	1	40	,438
Post-test Fluency & Coherence	,077	1	40	,783
Post-test Lexical Resource	,002	1	40	,963
Post-test Grammatical Range and Accuracy	,009	1	40	,925
Post-test Pronunciation	,033	1	40	,856

As a result of the Levene test, which was conducted to determine whether the pre-test and post-test scores obtained from the experimental and control groups showed a homogeneous distribution, it can be interpreted that the scores obtained from the experimental and control groups show a homogeneous distribution. Thus, the scores obtained from the pre-test and post-test, which formed the research design, can be evaluated as showing a homogeneous distribution.

One of the other assumptions of parametric analysis is that the data set (the scores obtained from the participants) displays the normal distribution. In this context, Shapiro-Wilks normality tests were conducted to determine whether the obtained data showed a normal distribution, and the results are given in Table 7.

Table 7. Shapiro-Wilks, Normality Test Results regarding Pre-test and Post-test Scores of Experimental and Control Groups

Group		Shapiro-Wilk		
		Statistic	df	Sig.
EXPERIMENT	Pre-test Fluency & Coherence	,948	21	,316
	Pre-test Lexical Resource	,953	21	,381
	Pre-test Grammatical Range and Accuracy	,974	21	,818
	Pre-test Pronunciation	,929	21	,133
	Post-test Fluency & Coherence	,956	21	,442
	Post-test Lexical Resource	,920	21	,086
	Post-test Grammatical Range and Accuracy	,957	21	,461
	Post-test Pronunciation	,946	21	,287
CONTROL	Pre-test Fluency & Coherence	,942	21	,240
	Pre-test Lexical Resource	,930	21	,136
	Pre-test Grammatical Range and Accuracy	,942	21	,240
	Pre-test Pronunciation	,941	21	,229
	Post-test Fluency & Coherence	,901	21	,037
	Post-test Lexical Resource	,864	21	,007
	Post-test Grammatical Range and Accuracy	,934	21	,168
	Post-test Pronunciation	,914	21	,066

According to the findings obtained from Shapiro-Wilks normality tests on the normality of the pre-test and post-test scores of the experimental and control groups, it can be interpreted that the pre-test and post-test scores of the participants have a normal distribution.

Finally, such descriptive statistics as the arithmetic mean, median, and kurtosis and skewness coefficients were calculated to decide on whether the experimental and control groups have a normal distribution. The findings obtained within this scope are shown in Table 8.

Table 8. Descriptive Values Regarding the Pre-Test and Post-Test Scores of the Experimental and Control Groups

Group		N	Minimum	Maximum	$\bar{X}$	Ss	Skewness	Kurtosis
EXPERIMENT	Pre-test Fluency & Coherence	21	2,00	6,67	4,6032	1,41664	-,144	-1,134
	Pre-test Lexical Resource	21	2,00	6,67	4,2222	1,30100	,333	-,566
	Pre-test Grammatical Range and Accuracy	21	2,00	7,00	4,4444	1,39974	,118	-,833
	Pre-test Pronunciation	21	2,33	6,67	4,3651	1,42168	,295	-1,109
	Post-test_ Fluency & Coherence	21	3,67	7,67	5,9365	1,18143	-,169	-,798
	Post-test Lexical Resource	21	4,00	7,33	5,9206	1,12499	-,247	-1,023
	Post-test Grammatical Range and Accuracy	21	4,00	7,67	5,9048	1,06010	,031	-,978
	Post-test Pronunciation	21	4,00	8,00	5,7778	1,24870	,203	-1,112
CONTROL	Pre-test Fluency & Coherence	21	2,00	8,00	4,3175	1,36413	,555	1,368
	Pre-test Lexical Resource	21	2,00	8,00	4,1429	1,37668	,796	1,933
	Pre-test Grammatical Range and Accuracy	21	2,00	8,00	4,1587	1,48556	,553	,692
	Pre-test Pronunciation	21	2,00	7,67	4,1905	1,34400	,498	,962
	Post-test_ Fluency & Coherence	21	3,33	8,33	4,7778	1,28380	1,089	1,396
	Post-test Lexical Resource	21	3,33	8,33	4,6508	1,24041	1,393	2,550
	Post-test Grammatical Range and Accuracy	21	3,00	8,00	4,7302	1,20931	,983	1,242
	Post-test Pronunciation	21	2,33	8,33	4,6032	1,40483	1,024	1,129

When the descriptive statistics and kurtosis skewness values related to the pre-test and post-test scores of the experimental and control groups were examined, it was revealed that the arithmetic mean and median values were close to each other. Moreover, the kurtosis coefficients are between +3 and -3, which is a critical value, so it can be interpreted that the data obtained from the study group show a normal distribution.

After it was determined that the data obtained from the participants within the scope of the research had a normal and homogeneous distribution, the following hypothesis was tested and the findings related to the hypothesis formed within the scope of the research are given.

Hypothesis

H_1: Digital Storytelling tasks improve the speaking skills of English language teaching students.

This research was designed as a quasi-experimental design with the pre-test and post-test control group. One of the assumptions to be considered in the pre-test-post-test experimental designs with the control group is that the participants in the experimental and control groups should be assigned to the groups impartially. In this context, before testing the research hypothesis, the t-Test for Independent Samples was conducted to examine whether there was a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores of the experimental and control groups. To that end, the Levene homogeneity test was performed to determine whether the pre-test scores obtained from the participants were homogeneously distributed. Levene Homogeneity test showed that the pre-test scores of the experimental and control groups were homogeneously distributed. [F(2,56) = .669, p>.05]. The obtained findings are shown in Table 9.

Table 9. T-test for the Pre-Test Scores of the Experimental and Control Groups

	Group	n	$\bar{X}$	Ss	t	p
Pre-test Fluency & Coherence	Experimental	21	4,6032	1,41664	.666	.509
	Control	21	4,3175	1,36413		
Pre-test Lexical Resource	Experimental	21	4,2222	1,30100	.192	.849
	Control	21	4,1429	1,37668		
Pre-test Grammatical Range and Accuracy	Experimental	21	4,4444	1,39974	.641	.525
	Control	21	4,1587	1,48556		
Pre-test Pronunciation	Experimental	21	4,3651	1,42168	.409	.685
	Control	21	4,1905	1,34400		

When Table 9. was examined, it was found that there is no significant difference between the pre-test scores of the experimental and control groups. [t(42) = .666, p>.05)], [t(42) = .192, p>.05)], [t(42) = .641, p>.05)], [t(42) = .409, p>.05)]. Thus, this finding can be interpreted as the participants in the experimental and control groups are at a similar level in terms of their scores.

After determining that the levels of the participants in the experimental and control groups were equal, a two-factor ANOVA was conducted for repeated measurements to determine whether there was a difference in the achievement scores of the experimental and control groups before and after the digital storytelling application.

Table 10. The Effect of the DST on the Speaking Skills of the Students in the Experimental and Control Groups; Two-factor ANOVA Analysis Results for the Significance of the Differences Between Pre-Test And Post-Test Scores: Fluency

Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	sd	Mean Squares	F	p	Eta Squared
Between Groups						
Group	10,954	1	10,954	4,307	,044	.10
Error	101,735	40	2,543			
Within Groups						
Measurement	16,890	1	16,890	18,511	,000	,32
Group x Measurement	4,001	1	4,001	4,385	,043	,10
Error	36,497	40	,912			

In order to determine the effects of the DST technique on the speaking skills of the students, a two-factor ANOVA was conducted for repeated measurements. In line with the findings, it was found that the digital storytelling technique led to a significant difference in the development of the speaking skills of the students compared to the control group [F(1,40) = 4.385, p<.05, η^2 = .10]. A line graph was created and given in Figure 1. to make the change in the experimental and control groups more evident.

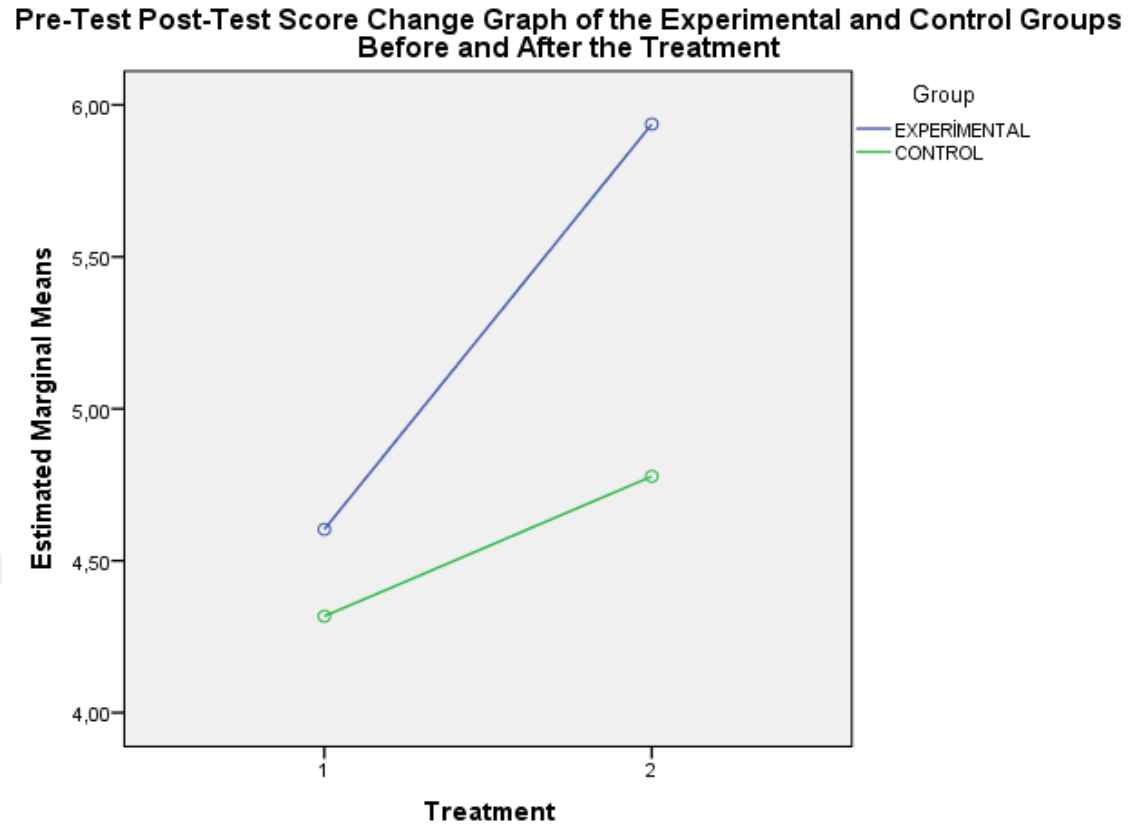

Figure 1. Line Graph of Change in Groups: Fluency

When Figure 1. is examined, it is seen that there is a temporal increase in the fluency of the participants in the experimental (1) and control (2) groups. However, it is seen that the increase in the pre-test and post-test scores of the experimental group, which received the treatment, was higher than the pre-test and post-test scores of the control group, which did not receive the treatment.

As a result, in line with these findings, the hypothesis of the research was confirmed. Therefore, it can be interpreted that the digital storytelling technique has a 10% significant effect on the speaking skill (fluency) of the students.

Table 11. The Effect of the DST on the Speaking Skills of the Students in the Experimental and Control Groups; Two-factor ANOVA Analysis Results for the Significance of the Differences Between Pre-Test and Post-Test Scores: Lexical Resource

Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	sd	Mean Squares	F	p	Eta Squared
Between Groups						
Group	9,557	1	9,557	4,206	,047	.10
Error	90,894	40	2,272			
Within Groups						
Measurement	25,557	1	25,557	27,669	,000	,41
Group x Measurement	7,440	1	7,440	8,055	,007	,17
Error	36,947	40	,924			

To determine the effects of the DST technique on the speaking skills of the students, a two-factor ANOVA was conducted for repeated measurements. In line with the findings, it was found that the digital storytelling technique led to a significant difference in the development of the speaking skills of the students compared to the control group [$F(1,40) = 8.055$, $p<.01$, $\eta^2 = .17$]. A line graph was created and given in Figure 2. to make the change in the experimental and control groups more evident.

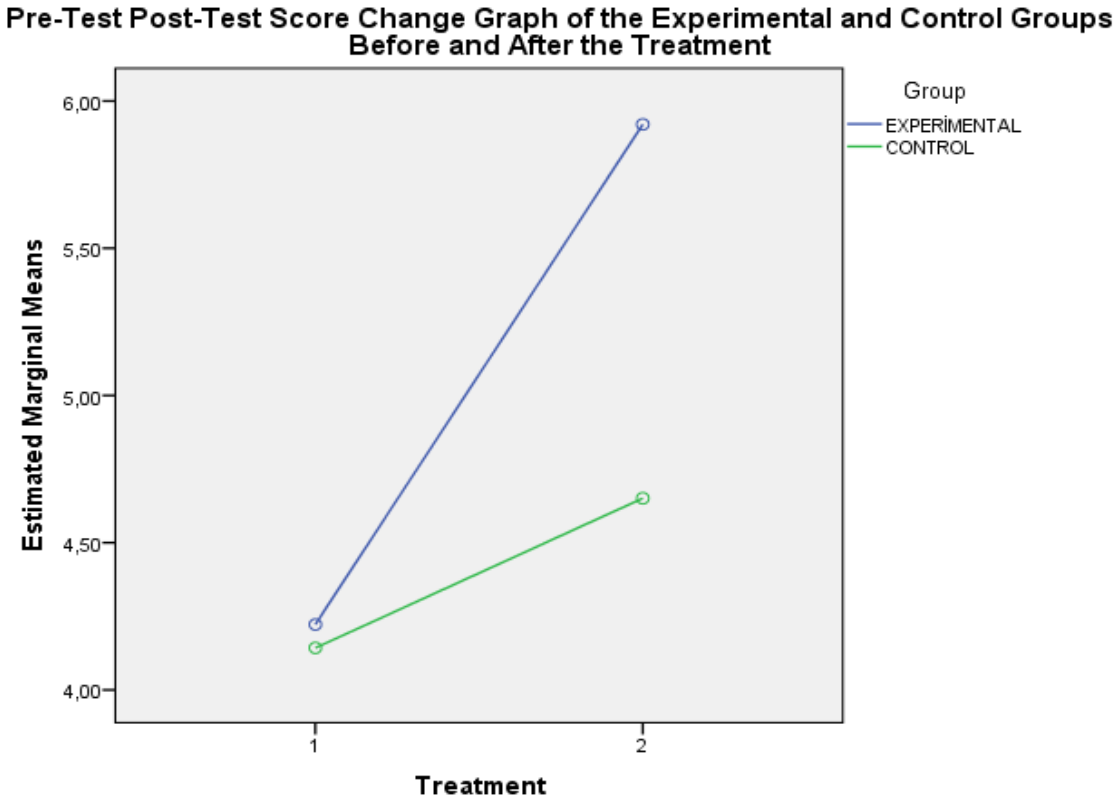

Figure 2. Line Graph of Change in Groups: Lexical Resource

When Figure 2 is examined, it is seen that there is a temporal improvement in the lexical resource of the participants in the experimental (1) and control (2) groups. However, it is seen that the improvement in the pre-test and post-test scores of the experimental group, which received the treatment, was higher than the pre-test and post-test scores of the control group, which did not receive the treatment.

Consequently, in line with these findings, the hypothesis of the research was confirmed. Therefore, this can be interpreted that the digital storytelling technique has a significant effect of 17% on students' lexical resource.

Table 12. The Effect of the DST on the Speaking Skills of the Students in the Experimental and Control Groups; Two-Factor ANOVA Analysis Results for the Significance of the Differences Between Pre-Test and Post-Test Scores: Grammatical Range and Accuracy

Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	sd	Mean Squares	F	p	Eta Squared
Between Groups						
Group	11,196	1	11,196	5,002	,031	.11
Error	89,534	40	2,238			
Within Groups						
Measurement	21,672	1	21,672	19,047	,000	,32
Group x Measurement	4,148	1	4,148	3,646	,006	,08
Error	45,513	40	1,138			

In order to determine the effects of the DST technique on the speaking skills of the students, a two-factor ANOVA was conducted for repeated measurements. In line with the findings, it was found that the digital storytelling technique led to a significant difference in the development of the speaking skills of the students in the experimental group compared to the control group [$F(1,40) = 3,646$ $p<.01$, $\eta^2 = .084$]. A line graph was created and given in Figure 3. to make the change in the experimental and control groups more evident.

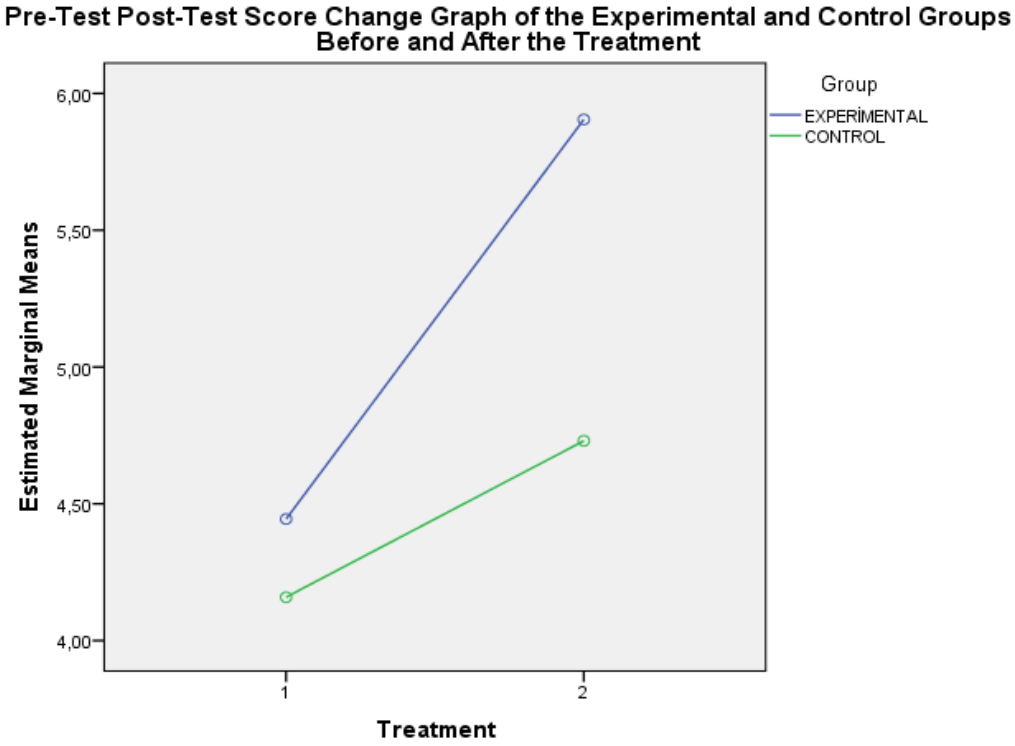

Figure 3. Line Graph of Change in Groups: Grammatical Range and Accuracy

When Figure 3. is examined, it is seen that there is a temporal increase in grammatical range and accuracy of the participants in the experimental (1) and control (2) groups. However, it is seen that the improvement in the pre-test and post-test scores of the experimental group, which received the treatment, was higher than the pre-test and post-test scores of the control group, which did not receive the treatment.

Consequently, in line with these findings, the hypothesis of the research was confirmed. Therefore, this can be interpreted that the digital storytelling technique has a significant effect of 8% on the grammatical range and accuracy of the students.

Table 13. The Effect of the DST on the Speaking Skills of The Students in the Experimental and Control Groups; Two-Factor ANOVA Analysis Results for the Significance of the Differences Between Pre-Test-Post and Test Scores: Pronunciation

Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	sd	Mean Squares	F	p	Eta Squared
Between Groups						
Group	9,557	1	9,557	3,461	,070	,08
Error	110,450	40	2,761			
Within Groups						
Measurement	17,493	1	17,493	19,037	,000	,32
Group x Measurement	5,250	1	5,250	5,713	,022	,13
Error	36,757	40	,919			

To determine the effect of the DST technique on the speaking skills of the students, a two-factor ANOVA was conducted for repeated measurements. In line with the findings, it was found that the digital storytelling technique led to a significant difference in the development of the speaking skills of the students compared to the control group [$F(1,40) = 5,713$ $p<.01$, $\eta^2 = .13$]. A line graph was created and given in Figure 4. to make the change in the experimental and control groups more evident.

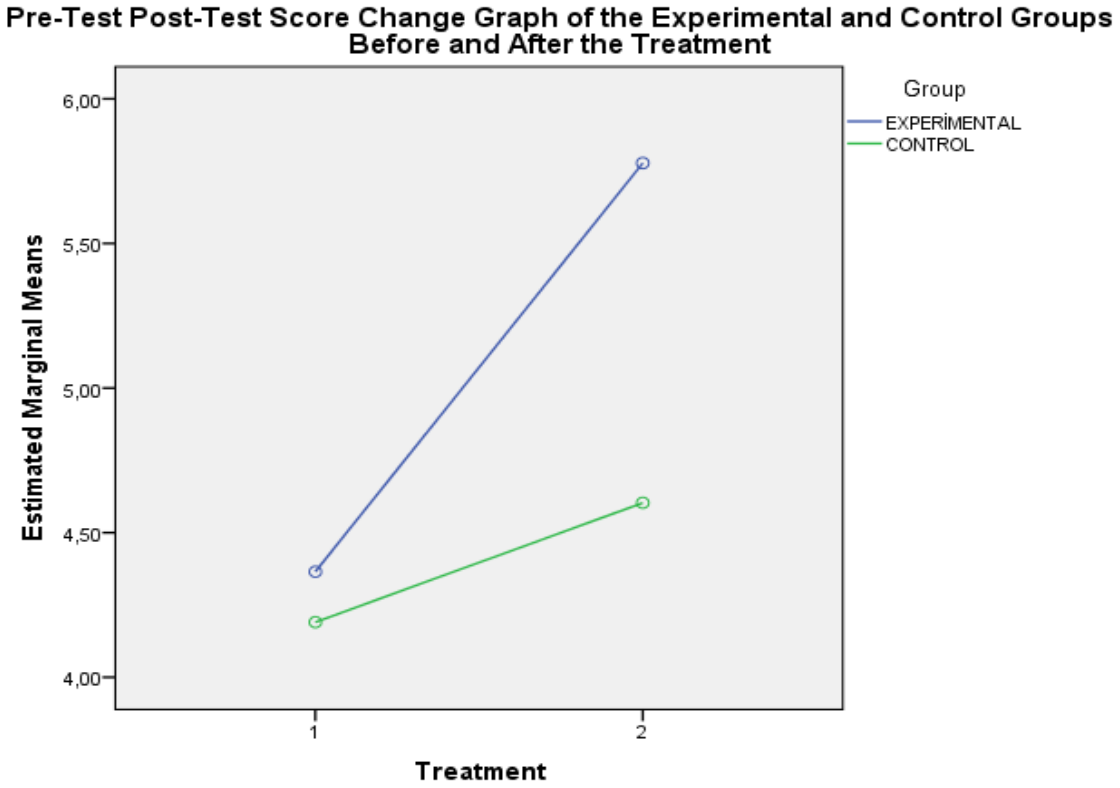

Figure 4. Line Graph of Change in Groups: Pronunciation

When Figure 4. is examined, it is seen that there is a temporal increase in the pronunciation skills of the participants in the experimental (1) and control (2) groups. However, it is seen that the improvement in the pre-test and post-test scores of the experimental group, which received the treatment, was higher than the pre-test and post-test scores of the control group, which did not receive the treatment.

As a result, in line with these findings, the hypothesis of the research was confirmed. So, it can be interpreted that the digital storytelling technique has a significant effect of 13% on the pronunciation skills of the students.

3.3. QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

Following the experimental implementations regarding the use of the DST practices, interviews were conducted with students who actively participated in the DST creation processes in the experimental group. In the interviews, students were asked about their overall feelings towards the use of the DST as an educational strategy to understand their experiences and perceptions about the issue deeply. The content analysis of the

interviews provided important information about the potential benefits of DST use in educational practices, and the difficulties experienced related to the DST. On this basis, two main themes, including stronger sides of the utilization of digital storytelling and its challenging aspects, were obtained, in addition to other sub-themes. The first question directed to the participants in the interview was, "What is your general impression about the use of the DST in terms of teaching/learning English?". The answers given to this question were analyzed, and some themes were determined.

Table 14. The Views Of Students On The Use Of The Dst During Teaching-Learning Process

Positive Aspects	Participants' Codes	f	%
Language proficiency	P5, P7, P8, P10, P11, P12, P13, P16	8	38,09%
Digital skills	P4, P5, P6, P7, P10, P11, P15, P17	8	38,09%
Motivation	P3, P8, P12, P14, P17, P19, P20	7	33,33%
comprehension of the story	P14, P17, P19	3	14,28%
Self-organized learning environment	P15	1	4,76%
Research skills	P20	1	4,76%
Self-confidence	P12	1	4,76%
Negative Aspects			
Technical problems	P1, P15,	2	9,52%
Challenging process to accomplish	P2, P20	2	9,52%

Regarding the strong sides of the DST technique, 8 of the participants (38,09%) mentioned the effects of using the technique on language skills (reading, writing, speaking, and listening). According to interviewees, the DST tasks help them improve their language skills. To illustrate, P5 expressed, "DST is important for learning because it helps us in many areas. While making the videos, you improve your language skills along with your computer skills". In parallel with P5, another student, P7, said that "Doing DST helped me improve my computer and reading skills." Similarly, P10 stated that:

> Actually, in some points, the DST really helped me to improve my speaking skills and it also helped me to improve my listening and reading skills. You have to listen to the recording many times to check your pronunciation, so it affects your listening skills. Another advantage of the technique for me, it enhanced my capability of reading English books.

P12, with a slightly detailed description, put her ideas into words:

> I certainly believe that this activity is helpful and beneficial for us to boost our reading skills, pronunciation skill, vocabulary and writing skills because while reading what we wrote, we paid great attention to pronunciation and words we chose. So, I think that I have improved myself by means of this activity in terms of both my skills and self-confidence.

The second sub-theme related to the strong sides of the DST technique within the scope of the first question was that the DST has some effects on improving or developing digital skills. 8 of the participants (38,09%) emphasized that the DST tasks help them improve their digital skills. P7 clarified how the DST tasks were beneficial in the improvement of digital skills by saying, "It was really hard for me to do DST tasks because my computer using skills were really bad at the beginning, but in time, I improved myself. Creating digital stories helped me improve my digital skills". Additionally, P5 declared that "DST is an important learning instrument because it helps us improve ourselves in many fields and most importantly while creating digital stories, my computer using skills highly improved." Another student, P10, stated, "DST tasks helped me learn how I can use the computer better." P11 believe that the DST tasks were beneficial for her in terms of improving her digital skills; she said: "In general, I liked them, and they showed me that I can create videos about anything I want to."

The third sub-theme that emerged as a stronger side of the DST, within the scope of the first question, was that the DST increases motivation. 7 of the participants (33,33%) agreed with the idea that the DST tasks can boost the students' motivation due to their entertaining, enjoyable, and salutary effects. In this sense, P3 stated, "It can serve as a way of making stories about anything more fun and engaging." The idea that the DST tasks increase motivation was supported by another student, P14 put his idea by saying, "I think learning a language primarily requires engagement, and the DST does a good job at engaging the students and entertaining them in the process, thanks to its entertaining aspect."

The fourth sub-theme under the strong sides of the DST was that the DST supports the comprehension of the story. 3 of the participants (14,28%) stressed that the creation process of digital stories supported them to understand the short stories they read thoroughly. For instance, P14 declared: "I think it is a fun and entertaining way of telling stories, and it makes the story more comprehensible." In the same vein, P19 said: "In my

opinion, digital storytelling affected me in many good ways. Especially, it was very useful to understand the stories deeply. That we use music, photos, and our voice contribute a lot to grasp the idea in stories". Lastly, P17, with a similar perspective, stated: "I think it is useful for learners because it can help them in their learning journey to grasp the ideas with a more enjoyable way."

The fifth sub-theme was related to the learning environment that the use of the DST tasks can contribute. Such a learning environment might be associated with the self-organized learning environment, which is "an innovative pedagogy designed to facilitate student development of 21st-century learning skills" (Weisblat et al., 2019). In this context, 1 of the participants (4,76%) P15 expressed: " I think, DST works for many English learners both in improving language skills and improving self-learning development."

The sixth theme determined under the strong sides of the DST was that it has effects on research skills. 1 of the participants (4,76%), P20, claimed that her research skills have improved thanks to DST tasks:

> At the beginning of the process, I was looking up a lot of words, reading a lot of analyzes about the story, and searching for videos about it. This researching process was hard at first but then, it got easier because I learned how to conduct a research throughout the creation process of the digital stories.

The last sub-theme that appeared as a strong side of the DST was that it enhances self-confidence. Sometimes students do not feel comfortable speaking in the classroom even though they want to speak. At this point, the DST tasks might be helpful for students to overcome that condition. In this regard, 1 of the participants (4,76%), P12, specified: " I think that I have improved myself by means of this activity both in terms of language skills and self-confidence."

Regarding the weaker features of the DST use in education, three participants (14,28%) highlighted technical difficulties they experienced during the development of digital stories. In this regard, P15 mentioned the problems they experienced related to access to the Internet by asserting that "To be honest, DST was really boring in the dormitory. It is because finding Internet is not easy for many of us". In addition, P1 cited another technical challenge encountered during the creation of the DST, noting that:

> At first, it was very boring for me to search for materials on google because when you liked something and wanted to add it in your digital story, you could not. Because google was downloading the files in a Jif format which cannot be used in editing program. That drove me crazy!

Furthermore, another negative side of the DST implementation expressed by the students was that they found the DST creation a challenging process to accomplish. For instance, P2 described the process as demanding by saying, "I like the idea of DS, although the process was painful." In the same vein, P20 clarified that:

> In the first process, when I tried to think of something and wrote a task about the story, I was looking for a lot of words, reading a lot of analysis about the story, searching videos about it. This researching process was really challenging for me.

The second question of the interview was about the use of the DST in language classes and students' opinions about the integration of the DST into language learning. The answers given to this question were analyzed, and 4 sub-themes were determined.

Table 15. The Views of Students on the Use of the DST in Classes and Their Opinions About the Integration of the DST into Language Learning

Themes	Participants' Codes	f	%
Positive effect on language skills	P1, P2, P7, P5, P8, P10, P12, P13, P14, P15, P16, P17, P18	13	61,90%
An enjoyable activity	P1, P3, P9, P14, P18, P20	6	28,57%
A challenging activity	P2, P7, P11	3	14,28%
No effect on language skills	P6	1	4,76%

It was seen that 13 of the participants (61,90%) found the integration of the DST into language learning useful and effective due to its improving and enjoyable aspects. P1 stated, "I think, it is a good activity for new learners since the activity makes you subjected to the target language. These kinds of activities enable students to improve themselves and make them better students". In parallel with P1, P17 pointed out: "In language learning, the DST activities can contribute to the learners in a way that makes them intrigued to learn language more comprehensively and to every aspect of the foreign language." 6 of the participants (28,57%) touched on the enjoyable aspect of the DST. To illustrate, P18 said: "When we use it in the process of teaching a subject in language classrooms, students will have fun and be happy in the learning process." Additionally, P3 clarified that: "As a student getting much homework is a kind of a bummer, but

objectively speaking, DST tasks are more useful and enjoyable than traditional homework."

On the other hand, 3 of the participants (14,28%) found it a challenging activity to do in the classes, and one of the participants, P6 (4,76), thought that it does not improve language skills. About the idea that the DST is a challenging activity, P2 confessed, "Learning how to use editing programs was really difficult for me. I could not find good pictures to use, the process was tiring, and it drained my motivation". P7 described the process as: "At first, it was really tiring for me to do DST activities literally every week, but I think its integration to the class would help students to learn the language." Lastly, one of the participants (4,76%) thought that the DST tasks were effective in acquiring digital skills rather than language skills: "I think, DST does not give a lot in terms of language learning, but I learned technical things such as making a video."

The third question of the interview was, "How do you evaluate the overall impact of DST on your speaking skill, considering especially different aspects of speaking such as grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and fluency?". The answers of the students to this question showed that the DST contributed a lot to students' speaking skills. 17 of the participants (80,95%) stressed that the DST tasks helped them improve their pronunciation; 11 of the participants (52,38%) specified that the DST tasks made a great contribution to improving their fluency; 9 of the participants (42,85%) noted that the DST tasks contributed to their vocabulary; 6 of the participants (28,57%) declared that the DST tasks made significant contributions to their grammar; 3 of the participants (14,28%) said that doing the DST tasks helped them improve their intonation.

Table 16. The Views of Students on the Effects of DST on Speaking Skills

Themes	Participants' Codes	f	%
Improve pronunciation	P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P10, P11, P12, P13, P14, P15, P17, P18, P19, P20, P21	17	80,95%
Improve fluency	P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P11, P13, P14, P19	11	52,38%
Improve vocabulary	P4, P5, P11, P12, P14, P17, P19, P20, P21	9	42,85%
Improve grammar	P4, P5, P8, P11, P14, P19	6	28,57%
Improve intonation	P15, P18, P21	3	14,28%

Regarding the themes listed in the table above, P11 stated: “DST makes the storyteller speak more fluently and use the proper words and pronunciation for a better understanding. It also helps with the correct grammar usage, and all these aspects make it a valuable learning technique”. Another student, P5, uttered: “while forming the stories, we need to use language correctly. It helps us improve our language skills in terms of grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and fluency”. P4 explained the contribution of DST as:

> I had a chance to look up the true pronunciation of words up. At first, I did not pay enough attention to digital stories, which caused lots of verbal mistakes. Throughout this time, I understood the value of pronunciation and fluency. Also, I improved my grammar knowledge and vocabulary thanks to DST tasks.

By stressing the pacing of her speaking, P6 said:

> Normally, I speak very fast but when I prepared digital stories, I had to read what I wrote slowly. In this way, I improved my pronunciation and fluency. When you read something slowly and record it, you can realize your mistakes and you can observe them. Now, I am paying more attention to my pronunciation to be understood easily. In the process of creation of digital stories, sometimes I had to reread the texts because of the pronunciation mistakes and that rereading has improved my pronunciation and memorizing skills.

P7 specified the situation by saying: “I do not think it helped me improve my grammar and vocabulary, but I cannot say the same things about the fluency and pronunciation because after doing digital stories, my fluency and pronunciation skills improved a lot.” P18 touched upon the issue by stating that “It helped me improve my speaking a lot. As I had to read correctly, I paid utmost attention. Also, I realized it has a huge impact on my intonation as well”. P15 mentioned the effects of DST by uttering:

> DST affected me in a good way. It has effects on my speech and pronunciation because I record my voice, so I realized where I was doing wrong. I paid attention to the tone of my voice. I noticed that I should use my voice in a useful way and be careful about my breathing.

P14 clarified the contributions of the DST tasks to his speaking skills by stating:

> It definitely helped me with the usage of proper grammar usage in speaking. It also improved my ability in pronouncing words correctly and saying them more fluently. I think the most important part is vocabulary. I love learning

> new words, so making digital stories has introduced me to many new words to use.

P20 mentioned the process to specify the impacts of the DST on herself:

> It had impacts mostly on editing which is easy to do for me now (laughing). The other impacts are on vocabulary and pronunciation. I read and watched a lot of stuff online, so I got to see different words and after finishing my task, I was looking for the pronunciation of the words I was not familiar with. Thanks to DST tasks, now, I know the correct pronunciation of some words and I am better at guessing the ones I am not very familiar with.

The fourth question of the interview was, "What are your thoughts about Digital Storytelling tasks? What were the challenges you encountered while you engaged with different stages (research, text writing, editing, presentation) of DST tasks?". When the answers given to this question were analyzed, it was seen that students had difficulty in six different points, which are shown in the table above. 13 of the participants (61,90%) stated they faced difficulties in finding proper images and music related to short stories they retold in the process of digital story creation. 5 of the participants (23,80%) stated they had difficulty in editing the videos. Another difficulty for students was summarizing the short stories; 4 of the participants (19,04%) touched upon this issue. For 2 participants (9,52%), finding a quiet place to record their voices was a difficulty in the process. On the other hand, 1 of the participants (4,76%) said she found creating personal stories challenging due to the lack of sufficient life experience. 1 of the participants (4,76%) mentioned the difficulty in text writing when creating personal stories, and 1 of the participants (4,76%) stated she had no challenging situation throughout the digital story creation process

Table 17. The Thoughts of Students About the DST Tasks and Challenges They Encountered While Preparing the Tasks

Themes	Participants' Codes	f	%
Finding related images or music	P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P8, P10, P11, P12, P15, P17, P19, P20	13	61,90%
Editing	P2, P4, P16, P17, P20	5	23,80%
Summarizing the stories to retell	P3, P11, P13, P14	4	19,04%
Finding a quiet place to record voice	P9, P21	2	9,52%
Creating personal stories	P7	1	4,76%
Text writing	P11	1	4,76%
No difficulty	P8	1	4,76%

Some of the participants' views about the themes determined under the fourth question are as follows. Regarding the theme, "finding related images or music", P10 specified: "The challenges I encountered were all about finding related pictures to the story." P17 expressed her thoughts on the issue as follows:

> Overall, it was enjoyable to make digital stories. Of the challenges, I can say that editing was the hardest and sometimes I had hard times finding images that were related to the story. However, when I finished the digital story, it was all worth it.

P15 stated, "The challenges were not text writing or making out the story. The hardest thing was finding photos about my topic. Sometimes I felt that photos did not make sense in the video". In parallel with the P15, P5 remarked, "I think the most challenging part was finding appropriate images for the video." Additionally, P1 underlined the copyright issues of music and pictures and said: "Finding background music was so hard that it is nearly impossible to act in an ethical way all the great background music has copyright issues."

Editing the videos, especially at the beginning of the process, seems to be a big problem for some of the participants. In this sense, P20 stated:

> In today's conditions, if you really know how to do it, researching is the easiest thing. Text writing was boring, and editing was hard. It took a long time to find photos and turned them into a video. Voice recording was stressful sometimes because even the smallest sound could be heard during the recording, and the editing was the hardest at first, but then I was able to do it quickly.

P16, in an optimistic manner, stated that:

> The answer is obvious, editing. I do not have experience in this topic but over time, I learned how to use editing programs and I prepare digital stories. When I become a teacher, I need to know these programs because to teach English I need to know such things. Learning a language sometimes looks like boring, but such a task can be beneficial.

4 of the participants who found summarizing the short stories challenging told what kind of problems they encountered. For example, P14 expressed:

> I think, integrating or not integrating some of the details from the story was the hardest part. Some of the sentences in the story seemed unnecessary, so I did not want to use them since the story would drag on. However, I did not

> want to omit sentences that would prove to be important later on. So, it was kind of hard to choose.

In the same vein, P3 uttered: “Simplifying a story and finding the appropriate images and music was hard, but once you succeed, the result is satisfying.”

Two of the participants complain about the difficulty in finding a quiet place for the recording session. One of them, P21, stayed at a dormitory and stated the problem: “recording my voice was really a big problem. Every week I went to different floors, or garden, or masjid to record my voice”. The other participant, P9, clarified the problem as:

> The biggest challenge was to find a quiet place where I can record my voice without being interrupted by kids’ shouting and their mother shouting back at them. The rest was easy and fun. But, being obliged to record the same text over and over again for hours just because of the noisy environment was frustrating.

Speaking of lack of sufficient life experience, it might be good to remind the process. In the first four weeks of the study, students were asked to prepare digital stories about given short stories. For the last four weeks of the study, they were asked to prepare personal digital stories such as memorial stories, or stories about a place in my life, etc. In this sense, 1 of the participants, P7, mentioned:

> At first, while we were doing digital stories about short stories, it was really good, but in the last four weeks, we’ve done digital stories about our own lives, and it was really hard because I am only 19 years old, and I do not have many stories to tell. That’s why I did not like the digital stories I did in the last weeks.

P11 made a comparison between retelling the short stories and personal stories by saying: “At first, it was hard to summarize the stories we were given, but after a while, I understood that it was harder to write the text of stories about ourselves.” Lastly, P8 hinted that she did not have any difficulty in the creation process: “I had a great time while searching for suitable photos and videos and recording. I really love editing part. While making a digital story, I learned new editing techniques”.

The last interview question was about the practices that students would sustain or leave about the tasks when they become teachers. The following table illustrates the themes determined within the scope of the last question asked in the interview.

Table 18. The Practices That Students Would Sustain or Leave About the DST Tasks When They Become Teachers

Themes	Participants' Codes	f	%
Enthusiastic about using DST while teaching in the future	P3, P4, P5, P8, P9, P11, P12, P13, P15, P16, P17, P18, P19, P20	14	61,90%
Variety in the assessment of the DST tasks	P12, P5, P20	3	14,28%
Students' level and age	P3, P18, P15	3	14,28%
Use as an out-of-class activity	P15, P18	2	9,52%
Not willing to apply DST tasks	P7, P21	2	9,52%
Tasks' deadline	P2,	1	4,76%

It was seen that 14 of the interviewees (61,90%) reached a consensus on the efficiency of using the DST technique in teaching language skills in the future when they will become teachers. In this sense, P16 stated:

> When I become a teacher, of course, I will use these tasks for my students because it is beneficial for their speaking skill and other language skills. It was a great experience for me; at first sight, I even thought it was hard to do but later, I realized it is very important and useful technique in teaching language skills.

P5 expressed her enthusiasm about using the technic: "It is getting important to use computer and technological devices, so in the future, I would like to apply this technique with my students. There is nothing I want to extract about the process." In the same vein, P13 stated, "I think all of the process and practices are quite good and convenient. I'd like to sustain the process as we do." Another student, P17 said: "When I become a teacher, I will definitely use the tools that I've implemented throughout the DST process."

3 of the participants (14,28%) declared that they would utilize some other assessment strategies when they use DST tasks. In this sense, P12 mentioned:

> I would like to maintain this activity when I become a teacher because it includes all English learning skills, especially pronunciation. However, I would make the activity a bit different. What I mean is that I would let the videos be seen by all students, and they could comment on them. Thus, students can see different viewpoints and styles and enrich their videos by being affected by different students.

Similarly, P20 stated:

> I would do something that includes reading and then I maybe want them to make a video of their opinions about the video and they upload all the videos

> in an app where they all can see each other's videos. They would have to watch videos and comment on and then they all discuss their opinions.

3 of the participants (14,28) stated that they would apply the technique at different levels if they became teachers. P3 elicited this idea by saying:

> Expecting a student to edit and do all the processes correctly to have a satisfying result may be hard. Maybe high school students could accomplish those kinds of tasks. I doubt students younger than them would be capable of such a feat.

On the other hand, P18 specified her idea as:

> I will probably use the DST technique if I become a primary school teacher because I believe it will help kids understand better and have fun while learning. Also, if I become a high school teacher DST will be a homework option for me.

P15 said: "It depends on my students' age. If they are little, I will probably just make them watch the stories. However, if they are older, they will make the digital stories as we did." The statements of P15 and P18 hold the idea that DST tasks can be utilized both in-class and out-class activities depending on students' age and level. On the contrary, P7 and P21 declared that they would not use this technique in their classes. P7 explained the reason for this idea: "I would not ask my students to do stories about their lives because it is really personal and there can be students who would not want to talk about their private life." Additionally, P21 stated: "I don't know for sure what kind of practices I will sustain but I think DST is not one of them. I may give different homework to my students."

The last sub-theme for this question was about the task's deadline. P2 put this condition into words: "I would keep the research and writing parts, but I would give my students more time to complete their digital stories."

The results obtained from the interviews with the students in the experimental group revealed that the DST provides positive contributions to language skills, digital skills, motivation, and comprehension ability. Most participants who participated in the interviews stated that the DST improved their language skills. They also stated the challenges they encountered during the process. In this sense, the qualitative data findings offer valuable information about the implementation of DST in language classrooms. In addition, the quantitative results of the study indicate that the experimental group's

speaking performances are superior to those of the control group. In comparison to the control group, their speaking skills, including fluency, grammatical range and accuracy, lexical resource, and pronunciation, improved significantly.

CHAPTER FOUR

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

4.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter analyzes the results of the study derived from the examination of both quantitative and qualitative data in the context of the purpose of the study. In this quasi-experimental mixed-methods study, the effect of the use of the DST on the speaking skills of ELT students was investigated. As a result, it was determined that the speaking skills of the students in the experimental group, who were given the DST tasks as treatment, improved more than the students in the control group. In addition, the opinions of the students in the experimental group about the use of the DST in language classrooms were obtained through an interview.

In this section, the results obtained from the research were discussed by pointing out the similarities and differences with the other studies in the literature. Then pedagogical implications of the study are presented. Lastly, the limitations of the study and suggestions for further study are stated.

4.2. OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

The present study aims to determine the effects of the DST technique on ELT students' oral proficiency and get their opinions about the integration of the DST into language classrooms. The study was carried out with 42 ELT undergraduate students at a state university. In pursuing the aim of the study, a quasi-experimental mixed methods research design was adopted. The students were divided into experimental and control groups, and the students in the experimental group were asked to prepare 8 digital story tasks in 12 weeks time period while the control group followed the usual tasks in the curriculum. The data was gathered via pre and post-tests. The speaking scores of the students were gathered and evaluated by three raters depending on the criteria of the descriptive speaking rubric. Thus, this quasi-experimental mixed-methods study sheds light on the first research question through quantitative data.

The quantitative data were analyzed by using SPSS statistics software. For the normality and homogenous distribution of the scores obtained from the study group Levene Homogeneity test; for the normal distribution of data set Shapiro-Wilks Normality test; for determining if there is a statistically significant difference between the scores of the two groups t-test; for determining the difference in achievement scores of the two groups a Two-Factor ANOVA test, were implemented.

Following the collection and analysis of the numeric data, a semi-structured interview was designed to obtain in-depth information regarding the issue. Then, interviews were conducted with students who participated in the creation of digital stories in the experimental group. The purpose of collecting and analyzing qualitative data was to deeply examine and reveal the students' perceptions, feelings, and thoughts about the implementation processes they were involved in. The data gathered from these interviews were submitted to content analysis to determine codes, categories, and themes in connection to the research questions. Lastly, based on the data gained from the student comments, both the potential benefits of the use of the DST in language teaching and the challenges and problems encountered during the implementation of the DST practices were revealed.

4.3. DISCUSSION OF MAJOR QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS

A two-group, pre-/post-test research design was used in this study. The experimental group was exposed to the DST integrated speaking instruction, while the control group dealt with the same instruction without the DST tasks. The first question of the research was, "How do Digital Storytelling tasks influence the students' oral proficiency?". In this regard, the hypothesis "*Digital Storytelling tasks improve speaking skills of English language teaching students*" was tested. In the light of the statistical results obtained from the analysis of the post-test scores of participants, it was seen that there were improvements in the speaking skills of the students in the experimental and control group at different levels. Compared to the scores of the control group, the improvement in the speaking skills was 10% for fluency, 17% for the lexical resource (vocabulary), 8% for grammatical range and accuracy, and 13% for pronunciation, higher on behalf of the experimental group. The results confirmed that the students in the experimental group performed significantly better than the students in the control group,

and therefore the study's hypothesis was accepted. At this point, the results of the study show that digital storytelling has positive effects on the speaking skills of ELT undergraduate students. At this point, the results obtained from this study are consistent with the ones reached by Razmi et al. (2014), Abdolmanafi-Rokni and Qarajeh (2014), Piray Lema (2018), Esen (2019), and Zamzam (2020).

In their study, Razmi et al. (2014) investigated the use of the DST in an Iranian EFL classroom to explore the effects of computer based-tools on learners' narrative skills. They carried out the study with sixty students who were divided into two groups. The experimental group was asked to prepare digital stories of given stories, while the control group was asked to read the stories and present them. The results of the study showed that the students in the experimental group developed better oral skills (vocabulary, grammar, fluency, and pronunciation).

Similarly, Abdolmanafi-Rokni & Qarajeh (2014) conducted a study to find out the impacts of two methods of storytelling (digital storytelling and storytelling aloud) on the oral performances of 42 Iranian EFL students. They divided students into experimental and control groups. The students in the experimental group were exposed to 12 sessions of a digital storytelling course, while the control group had storytelling aloud instruction. The results of the study showed that digital storytelling developed the oral proficiency of students much more than storytelling aloud activities; namely, the students in the experiment group outperformed the ones in the control group.

The study by Tahriri et al. (2015) also supported the idea that the DST technique enriches the oral proficiency of EFL learners. Their study aimed to investigate the possible impacts of the DST on students' speaking skills and motivation. The data were collected through pre and post-tests and a motivation questionnaire, and the results of the study presented that participant students' speaking skills and motivation increased at the end of the implementations.

In the same vein, Piray Lema (2018) reached comparable results. She aimed to examine the impacts of the DST on 1st-year high school students' speaking skills. She collected the data through pre and post-tests and used a speaking rubric to evaluate students' speaking skills, that is, rhythm, pronunciation, stress, intonation, accuracy, and

fluency. The results of the study revealed that the DST was effective on students' speaking skills.

Esen (2019) reported similar results in his study, which aimed to investigate the effects of the DST activities on the speaking skills of 124 prep school students at a state university and their attitudes towards speaking. He also examined the participant students and teachers' attitudes towards digital storytelling as a technique to practice speaking. As a result, he found that the DST technique contributed to the oral performances of the students positively, and they developed a more positive attitude toward speaking and viewed the DST as a powerful technic to practice speaking.

Zamzam (2020) obtained a similar pattern of results from her study investigating the effectiveness of DST on learners speaking skills. The results of her study confirm that the DST technique could improve learners' speaking skills and increase their enthusiasm for speaking.

4.4. DISCUSSION OF MAJOR QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

This section of the study was based on the qualitative data obtained from the students who participated in the creation of digital stories. Their evaluation of the applicability of digital storytelling in language classrooms, its pedagogical benefits, along with the challenges it poses provided valuable information in answering the second research question of this study which was: "What are the opinions of students on the use of Digital Storytelling in language classrooms?".

The results obtained from the interviews with the students in the experimental group revealed that the DST provides positive contributions to language skills, digital skills, motivation, and comprehension ability. Most participants who participated in the interviews stated that the DST improved their language skills. As a matter of fact, the results of the studies (Balaman Uçar, 2016; Hamdy, 2017; Akdoğan, 2020; Akdamar, 2021) which revealed the effect of the DST on different language skills, support this finding. These studies have revealed that the DST improves reading, writing, and listening skills. Throughout the DST creation process, students can experience engaging and motivating instances related to the four basic language skills, which enhance students' language development positively. In this sense, Balaman Uçar (2016) reported

several advantages of using the DST in improving students' narrative writing skills. Similarly, Akdoğan (2020) presented several positive effects of the DST on students' English vocabulary and reading skills. On the other hand, Hamdy (2017) and Akdamar (2021) revealed that the DST contributes to the development of the listening skills of the students.

In addition to linguistic skills, some participants claimed that their digital skills have improved thanks to the DST technique. Digital literacy encompasses "the ability to read, write, view, listen, compose and communicate information" (Chan et al., 2017, p. 2). In this regard, a great deal of research corroborated this study's conclusion that the DST adds to the development of digital literacy (Banaszewski, 2005; Robin, 2006; Kim, 2018; Çetin, 2021). For example, the study conducted by Çetin (2021) revealed that creating a digital story increases the digital literacy level of pre-service teachers statistically significantly. Therefore, it could be concluded that the integration of the DST into language classrooms might have contributed to the development of students' ability to benefit from 21st-century communication tools (Brenner, 2014).

Another important finding was that the DST technique could increase students' motivation which was certainly an asset of the DST. Some participants attributed the increase in their motivation to the enjoyable and entertaining sides of the DST. In this regard, many researchers (Razmi et al., 2014; Sever, 2014; Tahriri et al., 2015; Bekar, 2019; Esen, 2019) reported that the DST could positively contribute to the motivation of language learners. The fact that the digital story creation process consists of steps that can develop all language skills may make the use of the technique attractive in language classes. In addition, it can be presented to students as an in-class or out-of-class activity, which can support students' self-confidence and willingness to express themselves.

One of the most important findings to emerge from the qualitative analysis is that the DST tasks were so effective in improving the speaking skills of language learners. The students claimed that they improved their pronunciation (17 participants 80,95%), fluency (11 participants 52,38%), vocabulary (9 participants 42,85%), grammatical knowledge (6 participants 28,57%), and intonation (3 participants 14,28%). According to the results of the quantitative data analysis, although the experimental group made the most improvement in vocabulary (17%) compared to the control group, the qualitative

data showed that the most improvement was in pronunciation skills. We might attribute the emergence of such a difference to the fact that the students recorded their voice for 8 weeks and thus became more aware of the improvement in their pronunciation. This finding is, to a large extent, consistent with the quantitative ones. Thus, it can be concluded that the DST might be a useful and effective tool in teaching and developing speaking skills.

The students' responses to the question on the use of the DST in the educational process revealed that they had some challenges while creating digital stories. The difficulties students faced were: finding appropriate images or music, editing the videos, summarising short stories to retell, finding a quiet place to record voice, and text writing about personal stories. Correspondingly, Mirza (2020) reported similar problems in his study investigating the effects of the DST on university students' oral proficiency. He discovered that the participants in his study had difficulty summarizing thoughts, dealing with background noise and mispronunciation, and editing videos.

The study's qualitative findings help us better understand how instructors will employ the DST in the future. When the students' responses to the question regarding using the DST when they become teachers were analyzed. It was clear that the vast majority of them wished to include the DST in the teaching-learning process. They believe that integrating the DST into the teaching-learning process provides teachers with some advantages. In this regard, it can be concluded that thanks to its reflective, active, liberating, and entertaining aspects, the DST technique can be used in the classroom as both a learning and teaching tool; teachers can use digital stories to present educational content such as presenting an idea, demonstrating a procedure, and reinforcing a topic (Wang & Zhan, 2010). According to Robin (2008), teachers who can create digital stories not only enable students to participate in a presented topic but also facilitate discussion about it.

Moreover, they thought that digital stories could help make abstract and conceptual topic contents more understandable. Based on Robin's (2008) thought, we can conclude that the use of the DST technique can support teachers while teaching young learners. However, as stated in the interviews conducted with the students in the experimental

group, the age and level of the students must be considered while applying the DST technique to get the maximum benefit.

4.5. IMPLICATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

This research extends our knowledge of the process of the integration of digital storytelling into English language teaching environments at the university level. At this point, teachers and students must make the most of technology resources today because teaching-learning activities are becoming increasingly active in the digital world. The DST is a popular tool that can contribute to teachers and students in this context. Moreover, students, pre-service teachers, and instructors can benefit from using the DST technique to obtain such 21st-century skills as critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, communication, media literacy, technology literacy, and social skills.

The evidence from this study suggests that the DST technique may contribute significantly to the creation of a more productive and interactive environment in language classrooms. The DST not only helps students improve their language skills and motivation but also fosters self-confidence and freedom of expression. Therefore, it can be considered an effective tool that can be utilized to ensure the active participation of students in language learning processes.

The current study investigated the effects of the involvement of students in creating digital stories on students' speaking skills. The findings of this study revealed that DS-integrated speaking tasks were both inspiring and engaging since the students were speaking for a meaningful purpose and audience. Based on the study's findings, which showed that creating digital stories in the classroom had a positive impact on students' speaking skills, it might be concluded that instructors might profit from doing so. They could also include the DST projects in their curriculum to help pupils develop their speaking and other language skills. Thus, based on the findings of this study, along with the previous reports, it can be concluded that this technology-enhanced tool can be a real asset in motivating, engaging, and promoting efficacy in the process of developing speaking skills.

4.6. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

In this study, a quasi-experimental mixed-methods study was conducted with the participation of 42 ELT undergraduate students who were divided into experimental (21) and control (21) groups. In the first stage of the study, quantitative data were used, and in the second stage, qualitative data were collected and analyzed through suitable techniques to address the research questions. Accordingly, the study showed that the results of the quantitative and the qualitative data were consistent and supported each other.

In the relevant literature, very few studies have been found that examine the effect of the use of digital stories on communicative skills (Öz, 2019). In addition, very few studies have focused on the use of digital stories in language classrooms at the university level. In this context, we believe that this study will have an important place in the literature in terms of examining the contribution of digital stories to the speaking skills of English language teaching students at the university level. However, we acknowledge that the present study has several limitations.

One of the limitations can be attributed to the relatively small sample size. Since the sample size of the present study was small, the findings of the study may not be generalized to all ELT undergraduate students. Therefore, similar studies with a wider sample size could be required to reveal the possible effects of the DST on speaking skills to obtain more generalizable results.

On the other hand, in the current study, students were used as a data source to reveal and examine the effect of digital stories on speaking skills. The opinions of teachers, who have a critical role in the education process and have the opportunity to see and observe the process from the outside, should also be included in future studies.

In addition, in this study, a quasi-experimental design and semi-structured interviews were used as data collection tools to examine the effect of digital stories on the development of students' speaking skills. In addition to these, observations can be done to reveal what is really going on during the use of digital stories in the classroom and the critical situations affecting this process, as well as students may be asked to keep diaries or journals that will allow them to reveal their own experiences and thoughts in depth.

Overall, it is recommended that the present study's findings be reviewed and generalized in light of the aforementioned limitations.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1. INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FORM

You are being invited to take part in an interview within the framework of a Master thesis: "The use of digital storytelling to improve English Language Teaching students' oral proficiency." The following information is provided to help you decide whether you wish to participate in this study. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask us if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part. Thank you for reading this.

Your participation is entirely voluntary and refusal to agree to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you choose to participate, you have the option to refuse to answer any question during the interview.

Your responses will help to expand the body of knowledge related to the integration of digital storytelling into English language classrooms to improve students' speaking skills. Specifically, your responses will be used to assist the researcher in understanding the practical implementation of digital storytelling activities in language learning.

The amount of time required to participate in the interview is approximately 15-20 minutes. Following the analysis of the interview data, you will have the opportunity to review and verify the researcher's reporting and interpretation of the data. Your name and any identifying details will be withheld, and your confidentiality strictly ensured.

Please note that there are no risks or costs associated with being a participant in this study. While you will not receive any direct compensation or credit for your participation, you may ultimately benefit from the knowledge and related outcomes obtained through this research. Thank you in advance for your participation and support.

Principal Investigator: Abdullatif UYUMAZ, Research Assistant
Department of Foreign Language Education,
Fatih Faculty of Education, Trabzon University
Phone: (0462) 455 16 82
E-mail: abdullatifuyumaz@trabzon.edu.tr

Thesis supervisor: İsmail AVCU, Assistant Prof. Dr.
Department of English Language and Literature,
Faculty of Literature, Atatürk University
Phone: (0442) 231 81 97
E-mail: ismail.avcu@atauni.edu.tr

Thesis co-supervisor: Bilal KARACA, Assistant Prof. Dr.,
Department of Foreign Language Education,
Fatih Faculty of Education, Trabzon University
Phone: (0462) 377 6744
E-mail: bilalkaraca@trabzon.edu.tr

Consent Form

I have read the protocol form and recognize that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time during the course of the study without consequence. I understand that my identity and other personal information will be kept strictly confidential and that I may ask for further information about this study at any time. I agree to participate in this study and have received a copy of this consent form for my records.

_____

_____

Participant's Signature Date

_____

Printed Name

APPENDIX 2. INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What is your general impression about the use of DST in terms of teaching/learning English?

2. Briefly describe the process of the use of Digital Storytelling (DST) activities in your class. How do you feel about the integration of DST into language learning?

3. How do you evaluate the overall impact of DST on your speaking skill, considering especially different aspects of speaking such as grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and fluency?

4. What are your thoughts about Digital Storytelling tasks? What were the challenges you encountered while you were engaged with different stages (research, text writing, editing, presentation) of DST tasks?

5. What kinds of practices would you like to sustain or leave related to DST tasks when you become a teacher in the future? Why or why not?

APPENDIX 3. PRE-TEST QUESTIONS

Ielts Speaking Test

PART 1
Introduction and interview [This part of the test begins with the examiner introducing himself or herself and checking the candidate's identification. It then continues as an interview.]

QUESTION 1

Part 1 – questions

- Which form(s) of transport do you usually use?
- What is the easiest way to get around your town/city?
- Do people use public transport where you live?
- Are there any problems with the public transport system in your town/city?
- How do you prefer to travel on long journeys?
- What is the most unusual method of transport you've ever used?

Part 2 – task card

Describe an interesting journey you have been on. You should say:
- where you went
- how you travelled there
- who you went with
- and explain what was so memorable about the journey.

Part 3 – questions

1. What methods of transport are most popular in your city / country?
2. What are some of the problems of long-distance travelling?
3. Has the way people travel changed much in the last few decades?
4. Do you agree that governments should do more to encourage greener methods of transport?
5. What measures could be taken to reduce problems of congestion in cities?
6. Do you think that transport problems are worse in urban or rural areas?

QUESTION: 2

Part 1 – questions

- Are there many public or national holidays in your country?

- Do you think there are enough public holidays?
- Do you like going away on holidays?
- Tell me something about your last holiday?
- Do you always like to go to the same place for your holiday?
- Where would you like to go for your next holiday?

Part 2 – task card

Describe a holiday you would like to go on. You should say:
- what place you would like to go to
- how you would like to get there
- what you would like to do while you were there
- and explain why you would like to go on this holiday.

Part 3 – questions

1. Which places in your country do visitors enjoy visiting most?
2. What are some of the benefits of going away on holiday?
3. Have there been any recent changes in the types of holidays that are popular in your country?
4. What kinds of benefits might a significant increase in tourist numbers bring to a location?
5. What are some of the negative effects of a dramatic increase in tourism?
6. What developments affecting international travel might there be in the future?

QUESTION: 3

Part 1 – questions

- What is the climate like in your country?
- Are there any problems with the climate in your country?
- What is your favourite type of weather?
- What kind of weather do you dislike?
- Would you prefer to live in a hot or cold country?
- What is the best/worst weather for travelling in?

Part 2 – task card

Describe an environmental problem. You should say:

- what it is
- how long it has existed
- how it affects people's lives
- and explain how you think the problem will develop in the future.

Part 3 – questions

1. Which environmental problems are people most concerned about in your country?
2. What are the main causes of these environmental problems?
3. Do you think it is the responsibility of governments alone to protect the environment?
4. What measures can individuals take to protect the environment?
5. Do you think large companies and business organisations should be more environmentally friendly? Why? How?
6. How can we teach children about the importance of protecting the environment?

QUESTION: 4

Part 1 – questions

- How much time do you spend using a computer at work or at home?
- What do you mainly use a computer for?
- Did you learn how to use a computer at school?
- Have you ever taken a course to improve your computer skills?
- Has the internet made your job / studies easier?
- Which device do you prefer to use for browsing the internet?

Part 2 – task card

Describe a piece of technology that you find useful. You should say:

- what it is
- what you can do with it
- how often you use it

- and explain why you find it so useful

Part 3 – questions

1. What are some of the main uses of technology for communication?
2. Do you agree that some people use technology for communication too much?
3. What differences are there between the attitudes of older and younger people to technology for communication?
4. Do you think that the advance of technology has improved standards of education in schools?
5. Would you agree that the rapid development of digital technology has had a positive impact on the world of work?
6. Do you think that the rate of technological expansion will slow down in the years to come?

APPENDIX 4. POST-TEST QUESTIONS

IELTS Speaking Test

PART 1
Introduction and interview [This part of the test begins with the examiner introducing himself or herself and checking the candidate's identification. It then continues as an interview.]

QUESTION: 1

Part 1 – questions

- How much time do you spend using a computer at work or at home?
- What do you mainly use a computer for?
- Did you learn how to use a computer at school?
- Have you ever taken a course to improve your computer skills?
- Has the internet made your job / studies easier?
- Which device do you prefer to use for browsing the internet?

Part 2 – task card

Describe a piece of technology that you find useful. You should say:
- what it is
- what you can do with it
- how often you use it
- and explain why you find it so useful

Part 3 – questions

1. What are some of the main uses of technology for communication?

2. Do you agree that some people use technology for communication too much?
3. What differences are there between the attitudes of older and younger people to technology for communication?
4. Do you think that the advance of technology has improved standards of education in schools?
5. Would you agree that the rapid development of digital technology has had a positive impact on the world of work?
6. Do you think that the rate of technological expansion will slow down in the years to come?

QUESTION: 2

Part 1 – questions

- How much free time do you have per week?
- How do you like to relax at the end of the day?
- What kinds of things do you enjoy doing at the weekends?
- Do you have any plans for next weekend?
- Do you prefer to spend your free time alone or with other people?
- Do you have enough free time to do all the things you enjoy?
- What would you do if you had more free time?

Part 2 –task card

Describe a leisure activity you like doing in your free time. You should say:
- what kind of activity it is
- how often you do it
- what equipment you need to do it and explain why you enjoy doing it. Part 3 – questions

1. What kind of free-time activities are typical in your country?
2. Have there been any recent changes in the types of leisure activities that people find popular?
3. Do you agree that it's important for people of different ages to do leisure activities together?
4. In your opinion, who is responsible for encouraging children to take up different leisure pursuits?
5. Do you think people have less time for leisure activities now compared to the past?
6. Do you think that technology has changed the types of leisure activities we enjoy these days?

QUESTION: 3

Part 1 – questions

- Are you a full-time or part-time student?
- What subject(s) are you studying?
- Why did you choose this/these subject(s)?
- Which topic/subject do you find the most difficult/interesting?
- What was your favourite subject when you were at school?
- What do you plan to do when you finish studying?
- Is there anything else you would like to study in the future?

Part 2 – task card

Describe a teacher that had a positive influence on you. You should say:
- what subject this teacher taught
- how long he/she was your teacher
- what positive attributes this teacher had
- and explain why you remember this teacher in particular.

Part 3 – questions

1. Some people say that your school days are the best days of your life. Do you agree?
2. Do you think school and university prepares young people adequately for real life?
3. Do you agree there is too much pressure on young people at school these days?
4. Some people argue that end-of-year exams should be replaced by continuous assessment. What do you think?

5. Have there been significant changes in schooling methods in your country in recent years?
6. Do you think schools and universities provide enough career advice to their students?

QUESTION: 4

Part 1 – questions

- Which languages do you speak?
- Do you think it's important for children to learn a foreign language?
- When did you start learning a foreign language?
- Do you enjoy learning languages?
- What activity do you find most useful for learning English?
- What do you find most difficult about learning English?
- Are there any other languages you would like to learn in the future?

Part 2 – task card

Describe a conversation you had which was important to you. You should say:
- when the conversation took place
- who you had the conversation with
- what the conversation was about
- and explain why the conversation was important to you.

Part 3 – questions

1. What are the main differences between spoken and written communication?
2. To what extent do you think the media influences how people communicate with each other?
3. Do you think there are differences in the way men and women communicate?
4. Do you think that people become better communicators as they get older?
5. Do you agree that education has a strong and positive effect on people's ability to communicate effectively?

What impact has the growth of technology had on the way people communicate and how do you think this will develop in the future

APPENDIX 5. ETHICS COMMITTEE APPROVAL

T.C.
ATATÜRK ÜNİVERSİTESİ
SOSYAL VE BEŞERİ BİLİMLER ETİK KURUL BAŞKANLIĞI

Sayı : E-88656144-000-2100265380
Konu: Etik Kurul Onay Belgesi

ETİK KURUL KARAR FORMU

KARAR BİLGİLERİ	**Oturum Sayısı : 15** **Karar No : 184**	**Toplantı Tarihi: 01/10/2021**
	Aşağıda bilgileri verilen proje ile ilgili çalışmanın, etik ilkeler açısından değerlendirilmesi isteği ile ilgili husus görüşüldü. Yapılan görüşmelerden sonra; söz konusu projeyle alakalı yapılacak çalışma için, araştırmanın gerekçe, amaç, yaklaşım ve yöntemleri dikkate alınarak konuyla ilgili çalışmanın gerçekleştirilmesinde **etik ve bilimsel yönden sakınca bulunmadığına** Etik Kurulu oy birliği ile karar vermiştir.	
PROJE - TEZ BİLGİLERİ	**Proje -Tez Danışmanı : Dr.Öğr.Üyesi İsmail AVCU** **Proje -Tez Yürütücüsü : Abdullatif UYUMAZ** **Proje -Tez Konusu : "İngilizce Öğretmen Adaylarının Sözel Becerilerini Geliştirmek için Dijital Hikâye Anlatımının Kullanımı"**	

SOSYAL VE BEŞERİ BİLİMLER ETİK KURULU		
Unvanı/Adı Soyadı	**Görevi**	**İmza**
Prof. Dr. Sait UYLAŞ	***Etik Kurul Başkanı***	*(e-imza)*
Prof. Dr. Ufuk ŞİMŞEK	***Etik Kurul Üyesi***	*(e-imza)*

Prof.Dr. Adem YILMAZ	***Etik Kurul Üyesi***	*(e-imza)*
Prof.Dr. Gökalp Nuri SELÇUK	***Etik Kurul Üyesi***	*(e-imza)*
Prof.Dr. Vedat KAYA	***Etik Kurul Üyesi***	*(e-imza)*
Prof.Dr. Musa BİLGİZ	***Etik Kurul Üyesi***	*(e-imza)*
Prof.Dr. Dilaver DÜZGÜN	***Etik Kurul Üyesi***	*(e-imza)*

APPENDIX 6. SPEAKING: Band Descriptors (public version)

IELTS

SPEAKING: Band Descriptors (public version)

Band	Fluency and coherence	Lexical resource	Grammatical range and accuracy	Pronunciation
9	• speaks fluently with only rare repetition or self-correction; • any hesitation is content-related rather than to find words or grammar • speaks coherently with fully appropriate cohesive features • develops topics fully and appropriately	• uses vocabulary with full flexibility and precision in all topics • uses idiomatic language naturally and accurately	• uses a full range of structures naturally and appropriately • produces consistently accurate structures apart from 'slips' characteristic of native speaker speech	• uses a full range of pronunciation features with precision and subtlety • sustains flexible use of features throughout • is effortless to understand
8	• speaks fluently with only occasional repetition or self-correction; hesitation is usually content-related and only rarely to search for language • develops topics coherently and appropriately	• uses a wide vocabulary resource readily and flexibly to convey precise meaning • uses less common and idiomatic vocabulary skilfully, with occasional inaccuracies • uses paraphrase effectively as required	• uses a wide range of structures flexibly • produces a majority of error-free sentences with only very occasional inappropriacies or basic/non-systematic errors	• uses a wide range of pronunciation features • sustains flexible use of features, with only occasional lapses • is easy to understand throughout; L1 accent has minimal effect on intelligibility
7	• speaks at length without noticeable effort or loss of coherence • may demonstrate language-related hesitation at times, or some repetition and/or self-correction • uses a range of connectives and discourse markers with some flexibility	• uses vocabulary resource flexibly to discuss a variety of topics • uses some less common and idiomatic vocabulary and shows some awareness of style and collocation, with some inappropriate choices • uses paraphrase effectively	• uses a range of complex structures with some flexibility • frequently produces error-free sentences, though some grammatical mistakes persist	• shows all the positive features of Band 6 and some, but not all, of the positive features of Band 8
6	• is willing to speak at length, though may lose coherence at times due to occasional repetition, self-correction or hesitation • uses a range of connectives and discourse markers but not always appropriately	• has a wide enough vocabulary to discuss topics at length and make meaning clear in spite of inappropriacies • generally paraphrases successfully	• uses a mix of simple and complex structures, but with limited flexibility • may make frequent mistakes with complex structures though these rarely cause comprehension problems	• uses a range of pronunciation features with mixed control • shows some effective use of features but this is not sustained • can generally be understood throughout, though mispronunciation of individual words or sounds reduces clarity at times
5	• usually maintains flow of speech but uses repetition, self correction and/or slow speech to keep going • may over-use certain connectives and discourse markers • produces simple speech fluently, but more complex communication causes fluency problems	• manages to talk about familiar and unfamiliar topics but uses vocabulary with limited flexibility • attempts to use paraphrase but with mixed success	• produces basic sentence forms with reasonable accuracy • uses a limited range of more complex structures, but these usually contain errors and may cause some comprehension problems • shows all the positive features of Band 4 and some, but not all, of the positive features of Band 6	• produces basic sentence forms with reasonable accuracy • uses a limited range of more complex structures, but these usually contain errors and may cause some comprehension problems • shows all the positive features of Band 4 and some, but not all, of the positive features of Band 6
4	• cannot respond without noticeable pauses and may speak slowly, with frequent repetition and self-correction • links basic sentences but with repetitious use of simple connectives and some breakdowns in coherence	• is able to talk about familiar topics but can only convey basic meaning on unfamiliar topics and makes frequent errors in word choice • rarely attempts paraphrase	• produces basic sentence forms and some correct simple sentences but subordinate structures are rare • errors are frequent and may lead to misunderstanding	• uses a limited range of pronunciation features • attempts to control features but lapses are frequent • mispronunciations are frequent and cause some difficulty for the listener
3	• speaks with long pauses • has limited ability to link simple sentences • gives only simple responses and is frequently unable to convey basic message	• uses simple vocabulary to convey personal information • has insufficient vocabulary for less familiar topics	• attempts basic sentence forms but with limited success, or relies on apparently memorised utterances • makes numerous errors except in memorised expressions	• shows some of the features of Band 2 and some, but not all, of the positive features of Band 4
2	• pauses lengthily before most words • little communication possible	• only produces isolated words or memorised utterances	• cannot produce basic sentence forms	• Speech is often unintelligible
1	• no communication possible • no rateable language			
0	• does not attend			

CURRICULUM VITAE

Personal Information	
Name Surname	Abdullatif UYUMAZ
Birth Date and Place	
Educational Background	
Undergraduate Study	Ataturk University, English Language and Literature
Graduate Study	Ataturk University, English Culture and Literature
Foreign Languages	English
Contact	
E-Mail	
Date	2022