

Digital Storytelling and EFL Speaking Skill Improvement

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Abstract—The aim of this study is to investigate the role of electronic storytelling in improving students' speaking skills, as well as their motivational level of learning English as a foreign language. The research questions are: What is the role of digital storytelling in improving students' speaking skills? Does utilizing digital storytelling improve learners' motivational level of acquiring English as a foreign language? The participants of the study were 49 Junior High School students, boys and girls from an Arabic-speaking town in northern Israel. The participants were from two tenth -grades (10 A, and 10 B). Grade 10 A has 11 boys and 12 girls. Whereas, 10B has 12 boys and 14 girls. Based on the findings of the current study, it can be concluded that digital storytelling is a useful pedagogical tool. It is very effective in helping teachers in guiding pupils to increase their speaking skills, as well as to increase pupils' desire of learning English as a foreign language

Index Terms—digital storytelling, speaking skills, EFL

I. INTRODUCTION

The research on Israeli education shows large discrepancies between the academic achievements of Jewish students and students from the Arab sector in Israel. These differences as reflected in data from the survey tests given to eighth-grade students beginning in the late 1950s (Blass, 2017). A nationwide achievement test called the Meitsav, an acronym in Hebrew for measurement of school growth and efficiency has been given to Israel's students since 2002 (Wolf, 2014). Reports and analyses of the Meitsav scores show that achievement scores in English and other subjects among Arab children are inferior to those among Jewish ones (Arar & Abo Asbah, 2013).

Several factors had been reported as reasons for such low achievements among Arab pupils (Blass, 2017). Ghenghesh (2010) suggested that learners' low motivation is among the factors for low achievement, especially when considering learning a second or a foreign language. Acquiring a foreign language could be a very frustrating experience for many children within the Arab school system in Israel. For example, Ghaleb (2002) points out several reasons for the difficulties of acquiring EFL including a lack of motivation for the children to learn English. Lack of exposure to English among Arab children is another reason for such difficulties. One way to overcome some of the mentioned difficulties is by enhancing children's motivation to learn English (Long et al., 2013). Learning motivation is defined as an internal state that energizes student behavior and gives it direction. In this context, Tengku-Sepora and Sepideh (2012) suggest that motivation enhances a child's academic performance. Using technology in education is a possibility to increase pupils' motivation.

According to Syafryadin et al. (2019), technology offers attractive and innovative models that increase pupils' motivation in learning English. Digital storytelling is an example of such a model. Digital storytelling is one of the alternative methods that make learning English more interesting. According to Kallinikou and Nicolaidou (2019), digital storytelling provides students with an opportunity to enhance their knowledge, skills, also the standard of education.

Based on the above-mentioned findings, it is reasonable to assume that utilizing digital storytelling might increase Arab-speaking pupils' level of motivation to learn English as a foreign language, as well as their speaking skills fluency.

The purpose of the present study is to test the role of electronic storytelling in improving students' speaking skills, as well as their motivational level of learning English as a foreign language. The main research question that the study will answer is: What is the role of digital storytelling in improving students' speaking skills? Does utilizing digital storytelling improve learners' motivational level of acquiring English as a foreign language? Acquiring a foreign language could be a very frustrating experience for many children within the Arab school system in Israel. For example, Ghaleb (2002) points out several reasons for the difficulties of acquiring EFL including a lack of motivation for the children to learn English. Lack of exposure to English among Arab children is another reason for such difficulties. One way to overcome some of the mentioned difficulties is by enhancing children's motivation to learn English (Long et al.,

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According to Syafryadin et al. (2019), technology offers attractive and innovative models that increase pupils' motivation in learning English. Digital storytelling is an example of such a model. Digital storytelling is one of the alternative methods that make learning English more interesting. According to Kallinikou and Nicolaidou (2019), digital storytelling provides students with an opportunity to enhance their knowledge, skills, also the standard of education.

Nair and Yunus (2021) define digital storytelling as the skill of transferring stories by the use of digital tools, such as texts, images, audio telling, and video. It is a contemporary method of utilizing several media sources to express the user's self, using stories. Furthermore, digital storytelling facilitates the ability of learners to enhance their speaking skills. According to Chambers and Yunus (2017), digital storytelling enables an interplay between context and content, thus facilitating better speaking capabilities on the part of the learner.

Kallinikou and Nicolaidou (2019) noted that digital storytelling can be used as multimedia in learning a language to assess pupils in improving their second language speaking skills. In addition, several types of research have shed light on digital storytelling as an instrument to enhance learners' motivation and engagement and as a way to improve speaking skills in second language studies.

Based on the above-mentioned findings, it is reasonable to assume that utilizing digital storytelling might increase Arab-speaking pupils' level of motivation to learn English as a foreign language, as well as their speaking skills fluency.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Technology had revolutionized the field of education. Language pedagogy is one of the educational fields that had been constantly changing due to technological advancement. Koroglu (2020) noted that language learners could easily access literary texts, novels, short stories, tales, poetry, and other teaching content. Kledecka (2001) suggested that learners of English as a foreign language can download stories recorded by English native speakers and thus are able to improve their pronunciation well as increase their joy of learning the language.

A. *Digital Storytelling*

As the name might imply, digital storytelling is telling stories while using digital media, such as texts, music, video, or recorded stories. Nair and Yunus (2022) defined digital storytelling as one's skills in telling stories using digital media. Digital storytelling is a contemporary method of utilizing media sources to express one's self (the storyteller) through stories. By conveying their stories, learners might enhance their speaking skills, suggested Nair and Yunus (2021).

Gurrieri and Drenten (2018) defined the term as the manner it is used. In practice, they suggested that digital storytelling is telling a story while using digital media. The practice of conveying a self-describing story by the teller enhances his or her speaking abilities. Sintonen et al. (2018) supported such a notion and added that through digital storytelling students may significantly improve their speaking skills. The story should be a short one, anywhere between 3-10 minutes long, and presented in a digital format that is compatible with computers or any other software that is capable of playing video files (Mirza, 2020).

Badawi et al. (2022) defined the term as a short story being told through digital media. The length of the story, emphasized by Badawi et al. differently from other studies, should last between 2-3 minutes, with the teller using photos and sounds to tell his or her story. It is important that the teller used his or her own voice, giving the story a personal touch. Of importance is the fact that the teller should plan the story, write it to him or herself, modify it as needed, and clarify it in order to make communication more appealing to the teller and to the listeners.

According to Arroba and Acosta (2021), digital storytelling refers to the specific mode of spoken production using technology with textual characteristics. They relate to digital storytelling as the practice of combining personal stories with multimedia (images, audio, and text) for the sake of producing a short movie.

B. *EFL Students*

English foreign language learners is a concept that is usually used to modify students who are non-native speakers, who are learning English in a place, in a country where English is not a tool of instruction or a language that is used (Awad et al., 2021). For Araba, English is a foreign language, because Hebrew and standard Arabic are second languages. Besides, Arab EFL students, do not have the chance to practice communicating in English since it is not commonly used within the Israeli Arabic-speaking sector.

A distinction should be made between English as a foreign language and English as a second language. Peng (2019) referred to the difference between the two phrases in terms of functionality, the learning process, the language environment, and learning methods. Foreign language according to Peng (2019) means the language that is used outside the country.

According to Saud (2019), EFL students must understand and speak the language during the English lesson, five times a week at some schools. The rest of the day, EFL students do not have to occupy themselves with the language, contrary to ESL students. Still, EFL is a required prerequisite for students entering colleges and universities, thus EFL students must ensure efficient and effective learning for achieving high academic achievement in order to meet the

requirement for enrollment in higher education institutions.

Thus, it is not surprising that most EFL students encounter a great deal of difficulty learning English as a foreign language (Rajab et al., 2020). This is despite the fact that English has been increasingly used in Israel as a principal medium of instruction in higher education programs. The fact that English had become the most popular international language does not ease the difficulties that Arabic-speaking students encounter while learning EFL. Altun and Sabah (2020) suggested that among the reasons Arabic-speaking students encounter difficulties learning EFL is the fact that the students are becoming passive due to a lack of using the language outside the classroom.

C. Learning EFL and Speaking Skills

Learning a new language requires improving the four skills of reading, listening, writing, and speaking. However, in most cases, proficiency is measured, mostly, by the learners' ability to speak or write the language, however, through speaking a student can interact with other speakers. Abdel Fattah (2006; cited in Badawi, 2022) defined speaking "as the ability to develop oral skills and mastery and includes the ability to negotiate and manage dialogues" (p. 30).

Somdee and Suppasetsee (2013) noted that speaking is an important skill to learn a foreign language, this is due to its chances to practice English for further improvement. Students' skill to speak is an indicator of their command of the language; however, such a task is a very challenging skill to develop because of the lack of extensive exposure to the language, along with the difficulty to be fluent spontaneously, with grammar accuracy.

Such competency is acquired over time and through the extensive absorption of the learners in the new foreign language (Arroba & Acosta, 2021). Having pointed out the importance of speaking skills as the most effective means to increase learners' fluency in the language, it is important to develop speaking strategies because it motivates the learners to participate in the classroom actively. Digital storytelling could be one such strategy. Utilizing digital storytelling, learners could develop all four categories of speaking skills.

Burns (2009) found four classifications of speaking skills, these are correct pronunciation, the role of, interaction, including role distribution and dialogue organization, as well as the use of linguistics and nonlinguistic features. Finally, the skill of organizing the speech in terms of explanation the objectivity of the speech, and the unity of the various parts of the speech.

For the sake of improving speaking skills, teachers should ensure that learners are involved in meaningful speaking activities. Teachers should respond to learners' interests and address such interests through speaking activities. This could increase learners' motivation to participate in the speaking activities. When teachers do not respond to learners' interests, the learners could become less attentive to the activity or to taking part in the interaction.

D. Effects of a Digital Story on Speaking Skills Development

As mentioned earlier, in most cases, the only exposure EFL learners to the language are inside the classroom. Based on the English curricula in the Arabic-speaking school system, very little attention, if at all is devoted to improving the speaking skills of EFL learners. Actually, there are very limited opportunities for learners to construct their knowledge of English, especially speaking skills. A significant amount of studies reported the advantages of utilizing digital storytelling in the classroom for the sake of enhancing EFL learners' speaking skills. Robinni et al. (2019) showed that the utilization of digital storytelling during English language lessons can improve students' speaking skills. According to the authors, digital storytelling contains many elements and characteristics that enhance the speaking skills of the learners, along with other elements that enhance learners' ability to speak more efficiently. They concluded that electronic storytelling makes it easy for the students to build digital stories from their own personal experience, thus enabling the learners to understand the content of the story while getting the opportunity to develop their speaking fluency.

Rubinni et al. (2019) reported another example that supports the significant improvement in learners' speaking skills while utilizing digital storytelling. Their study focused on secondary education, aiming to investigate the impact of utilizing digital storytelling on students' speaking skills in English. Their study included twenty secondary school students from Malaysia. The study found that there was an improvement in students' speaking skills after the production of their videos, and learners, moreover, had a positive point of view of digital storytelling.

Abdelmageed (2018) addressed the need to improve university students' speaking proficiency in terms of fluency and proper pronunciation and employed online digital storytelling to enhance the student's speaking skills. His findings supported the notion that digital storytelling does enhance Arabic-speaking students' (Egyptians) speaking skills.

E. Digital Storytelling and Students' Motivation

(a). Defining Motivation

According to Lei (2010), students who are motivated extrinsically rely depend on rewards and desirable results for their motivation. Furthermore, those learners are at risk of performing lower academically than intrinsically motivated students. Regardless of whether the source of motivation is intrinsic or extrinsic, Gardner (2007) addressed motivation in the classroom, calling it classroom learning motivation. In such cases, it is clear, for example, that the teacher, class environment, course content, resources, and facilities, as well as the student's own characteristics, can affect the individual's classroom learning motivation (Gardner, 2007).

It is up to the teacher to fathom what factors, and how, affect students' level of motivation, in order to increase

students' interest in learning EFL (Ushioda, 2019). Considering the fact that Arabic-speaking students face significant challenges acquiring EFL, teachers ought to have a creative solution to increase students' classroom learning motivation. Digital storytelling might be an option for such a creative solution.

(b). Digital Storytelling Enhances Students' Motivation

As a result, very often the students become demotivated, something that encumbers their learning abilities. It is up to the teachers to change such demotivating practices for the sake of improving students' self-confidence and increasing their motivation to acquire the language. Employing digital storytelling might provide the answer to teachers' search to enhance learners' motivation.

Gheghesh (2010) reported that the implementation of digital storytelling in EFL classes increases students' motivation and helps them develop learning. That means digital storytelling had computer technologies and the ability to tell and create stories while motivating students to use higher-order thinking skills when learning a foreign language. Utilizing technology while telling their own personal stories through digital media does increase learners' willingness to become more involved in classroom activities.

Nampaktai and Suksiripakonchai (2018) investigated the impact of digital storytelling on students' level of confidence. They reported that there was a significant difference in learners' speaking skills before and after using digital storytelling. A majority of students stated that digital storytelling enhanced their English-speaking ability and English-speaking confidence

Summing up the literature review, it seems that there is a piece of convincing evidence about the effectiveness of utilizing digital storytelling for improving learners' speaking skills. Strong evidence exists regarding the effect that digital stories have on learners' level of learning motivation. Digital storytelling seems to have a positive effect on learners' motivation to learn EFL, which eventually leads to an increase in learners' interest in the language, and in using the language, at least within the classroom, which ultimately helps the learners improve their speaking skills. The present study examines the effect of digital storytelling on Arabic-speaking students' speaking skills and learners' level of learning motivation.

The research questions are

1. How does the application of digital storytelling affect students' speaking skills?
2. How does the application of digital storytelling affect learners' motivational levels of acquiring English as a foreign language?

III. METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employs a quasi-experimental approach that aims to investigate the effect of digital storytelling intervention plans on learners' speaking skills as well as their learning motivation. The experimental method studies whether there is a cause-and-effect relationship between the research variables (Rahman, 2017). The researchers control or manipulate an independent variable (digital storytelling) to measure its effect on one or more dependent variables (speaking skills and level of motivation).

Participants

The participants of the study are 49 Junior High School students, boys and, girls from an Arabic-speaking town in northern Israel. The participants were two grade-10 classes (10 A, and 10 B). Grade 10 A has 11 boys and 12 girls. Whereas, 10B has 12 boys and 14 girls. The following table will show the participants of the study.

TABLE 1
THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE STUDY

Participants	Boys	Girls	total
Grade 10 A	11	12	23
Grade 10 B	12	14	26

Procedure

Once the researchers of the study got permission to carry out the study, they consulted the English teacher on how to move forward with the study. Based on the teacher's advice, two 10th graders were selected to be part of the study. 10th grade "A" would be the control group, while 10th grade "B" would constitute the experiment group. The researchers explained the objectives of the study and how the students should present their digital stories. The intervention plan would be carried out three times a week, meeting for an hour following students' daily school schedule.

In the first meeting, several digital stories were introduced to the students, examples of different content of the digital stories were suggested, and questions that the students had, were answered. Videos, presentations, mobile applications, podcasts, and iPods were suggested for the students to record their own digital stories. Students were advised to combine audio, images, animated clips, and more to tell a single story. Regarding the content of the stories, students were advised to be creative, to express their points of view, or to make up some factious story. Pre-intervention speaking skills test was administered to both groups. Tests were administered by the author of the study and the English teacher.

Data Collection

To answer the research questions and gather an in-depth understanding of whether the digital storytelling intervention plan influences speaking skills and level of learning motivation, a pre-test (before the intervention) and a post-test (following the intervention) were administered.

Measuring students’ speaking skills was based on the Knight Rubric assessment of speaking skills (1992). The rubric includes five criteria for evaluation: fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, and details (overall impression of the evaluator of the skills).

Data Analysis

Analysis of the data (pre and post-tests) was performed using the statistical package IBM SPSS 22. The first part of the analysis included a descriptive analysis of dependent variables. A two-sample test was used to test the significance of the differences in speaking skills, and motivation, prior to and post the intervention plan. Pearson correlation coefficient test (r) was used to test the correlation between the dependent variables (speaking skills and level of motivation).

IV. FINDINGS

The objective of the present study is to examine whether an intervention plan improves students’ speaking skills and their level of motivation to acquire EFL. The intervention plan consists of digital storytelling by members of the experiment group. Tests were administered to both groups, before and after the intervention. The underlying assumption of the study is that through digital storytelling, participants increase their level of skills as well as their motivation to learn EFL. Table no. 1 presents the averages and STD of the control group in the five components of the speaking skills, pre-intervention.

TABLE 2
SPEAKING SKILLS AVG. AND STD OF CONTROL GROUP – PRE-INTERVENTION

Descriptive Statistics – Avg. and STD Control					
	N	Mini	Maxi	Mean	Std. Deviation
Fluency	23	1.00	3.00	2.0000	.73855
Pronunciation	23	1.00	3.00	2.0870	.66831
Vocabulary	23	1.00	4.00	2.1304	.86887
Grammar	23	1.00	3.00	2.1304	.62554
Details	23	1.00	3.00	2.3478	.57277
Total	23	8.00	16.00	10.6957	1.76930

As can be seen in Table 1, the overall speaking skills of the participants show a very low skill level majority for the students. Weaknesses in their speaking skills are evident in all the different components of their speaking skills.

Table 3 presents the averages and STD of the experiment group in the five components of the speaking skills, prior to the intervention plan.

TABLE 3
SPEAKING SKILLS AVG. AND STD OF EXPERIMENT GROUP – PRE-INTERVENTION

Descriptive Statistics: experiment with pre-test					
	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
Fluency – experiment pre-test	26	1.00	3.00	2.2692	.66679
Pronunciation - experiment pre-test	26	1.00	4.00	2.3077	.78838
Vocabulary - experiment pre-test	26	1.00	3.00	2.2308	.58704
Grammar - experiment pre-test	26	1.00	3.00	1.9615	.66216
Details - experiment pre-test	26	2.00	4.00	2.5385	.58177
Total-experiment pre-test	26	8.00	17.00	11.3077	1.97523

As can be seen in Table 3, the overall speaking skills of the participants in the experiment group show a very low skill level among the majority of the students. Weaknesses in their speaking skills are evident in all the different components of their speaking skills.

Table 4 shows the significant level of differences between the two groups in terms of speaking skills prior to administering the intervention plan

TABLE 4
COMPARING THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN CONTROL GROUPS

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
The total – control group	10.6957	23	1.76930	-1.239	.228
Total – experimental group	11.4783	23	1.95098		

As can be seen in Table 4, the difference in speaking skills between the control and experiment groups, before the intervention plan, is insignificant. The averages speaking skills of both groups are low, and the difference is insignificant (P>0.005).

A. *Finding – Post-Intervention*

TABLE 5
AVERAGES AND STD OF THE CONTROL GROUP POST-INTERVENTION

Descriptive Statistics - control group post-intervention					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Fluency control post-intervention	23	1.00	3.00	2.0870	.66831
Pronunciation control post-intervention	23	1.00	4.00	1.8696	.75705
Vocabulary control post-intervention	23	1.00	3.00	1.8261	.77765
Grammar control post-intervention	23	1.00	3.00	1.7826	.73587
Details control post-intervention	23	1.00	3.00	1.8696	.69442
Total control post-intervention	23	5.00	13.00	9.4348	1.67403
Valid N (list-wise)	23				

Considering the fact that the control group did not participate in the intervention plan, it is not surprising that the overall averages of students' speaking skills did not change significantly, as can be seen in Table 5. It should be noted that the low averages in speaking skills did not change because the control group did not participate in the intervention plan. The vocabulary component of the speaking skills seems to be the students' weakest part at an average of 1.78 out of 5.

Table 6 compares the significance of the differences between the control group in the pre and post-intervention.

TABLE 6

Paired Samples Statistics – control group pre and post-intervention						
	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
Control - pre	9.8261	23	1.19286	.24873	1.274	.216
Control- post	9.5217	23	1.47308	.30716		

As can be seen in Table 6, $P > 0.005$ indicates that there is no significant difference between the total of the control group pre and post-intervention. This is to be expected since the control group did not take part in presenting digital storytelling.

TABLE 7
COMPARING EXPERIMENT GROUP – POST AND PRE-INTERVENTION – TOTAL SPEAKING SKILLS

Paired Samples Statistics- speaking skills – pre and post -intervention						
	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
Total skills – experiment post-intervention	15.4231	26	1.85845	.36447	10.564	.000
Total skills – experiment pre-intervention	11.3077	26	1.97523	.38737		

The intervention plan helped the students improve their overall speaking skills from an average of 11.03 (out of 25) to an average of 15.42. The increases in students' averages were significant. Table 7 shows the significance of the difference between pre-intervention and post-intervention averages of skills ($P < .000$).

There is a significant difference between averages of speaking skills during pre and post-intervention ($P = .000$) indicating the success of the intervention plan. Digital storytelling is an efficient and effective method to improve students' speaking skills.

B. Pre-Intervention – Motivation – Control Group

TABLE 8
AVG. AND STD OF THE LEVEL OF LEARNING MOTIVATION – CONTROL GROUP PRE-INTERVENTION

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
I am very interested in learning how to speak English in this course.	23	1.00	4.00	2.0435	.82453
I like the subject matter of this course (especially learning how to speak English).	22	1.00	3.00	1.8182	.66450
I like to learn.	23	1.00	3.00	2.0000	.67420
I'm trying hard enough to learn.	23	1.00	3.00	2.0000	.60302
It is important for me to learn how to speak English in this course.	23	1.00	3.00	1.8261	.65033
Understanding how to speak English is very important to me.	23	1.00	3.00	1.8696	.69442
I think I will be able to use what I learn in this course in my everyday life.	23	1.00	3.00	1.8261	.57621
I think the course material in this course is useful for me to learn how to speak English	23	1.00	3.00	1.6087	.58303
I am confident I can understand English and speak English to other people.	23	1.00	3.00	1.5652	.66237
I am certain I can learn how to speak English	23	1.00	3.00	1.3913	.65638

As can be seen in table no 8, students in the control group have a very low level of motivation to learn EFL.

TABLE 9
LEVEL OF MOTIVATION –MEANS AND STD OF THE CONTROL GROUP-POST INTERVENTION

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Mini mum	Maxi mum	Mean	Std. Deviation
I am very interested in learning how to speak English in this course.	23	1.00	3.00	1.7826	.73587
I like the subject matter of this course (especially learning how to speak English).	23	1.00	3.00	1.7391	.68870
I like to learn.	23	1.00	3.00	1.6087	.58303
I'm trying hard enough to learn.	23	1.00	3.00	1.5217	.66535
It is important for me to learn how to speak English in this course.	23	1.00	3.00	1.3913	.58303
Understanding how to speak English is very important to me.	23	1.00	3.00	1.5217	.66535
I think I will be able to use what I learn in this course in my everyday life.	23	1.00	2.00	1.3913	.49901
I think the course material in this course is useful for me to learn how to speak English	23	1.00	2.00	1.2609	.44898
I am confident I can understand English and speak English to other people.	23	1.00	2.00	1.6522	.48698
I am certain I can learn how to speak English	23	1.00	2.00	1.3913	.49901

TABLE 10
COMPARING PRE AND POST- LEVEL OF MOTIVATION – CONTROL GROUP

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	t	Sig. (2-tailed- p
Control – pre= intervention	1.6675	10	.16516	1.950	.083
Control – post-intervention	1.5261	10	.16956		

As can be seen in table 10 and chart 8, the changes in the level of motivation were not significant, and actually, following the intervention plan, the level of motivation decreased among the control group (P>0.005).

TABLE 11
LEVEL OF MOTIVATION –THE EXPERIMENTAL GROUP – PRE-INTERVENTIO

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Mini mum	Maxi mum	Mean	Std. Deviation
I am very interested in learning how to speak English in this course.	26	1.00	3.00	1.6538	.62880
I like the subject matter of this course (especially learning how to speak English).	25	1.00	2.00	1.5600	.50662
I like to learn.	26	1.00	3.00	1.6923	.54913
I'm trying hard enough to learn.	26	1.00	3.00	1.7692	.58704
It is important for me to learn how to speak English in this course.	26	1.00	3.00	1.4615	.58177
Understanding how to speak English is very important to me.	26	1.00	2.00	1.5000	.50990
I think I will be able to use what I learn in this course in my everyday life.	26	1.00	3.00	1.5769	.57779
I think the course material in this course is useful for me to learn how to speak English	26	1.00	3.00	1.7308	.72430
I am confident I can understand English and speak English to other people.	26	1.00	2.00	1.6923	.47068
I am certain I can learn how to speak English	26	1.00	3.00	1.6538	.56159

Similar to the motivational level among the control group, participants in the experiment group, prior to the intervention, show a low level of motivation to learn EFL. Table 12 shows the level of motivation in post-intervention

TABLE 12
EXPERIMENT GROUP – LEVEL OF MOTIVATION POST-INTERVENTION

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
I am very interested in learning how to speak English in this course.	26	2.00	4.00	2.9231	.68836
I like the subject matter of this course (especially learning how to speak English).	26	1.00	4.00	2.8462	.73170
I like to learn.	26	1.00	4.00	2.9615	.72004
I'm trying hard enough to learn.	26	2.00	4.00	2.8846	.65280
It is important for me to learn how to speak English in this course.	26	2.00	4.00	2.6923	.67937
Understanding how to speak English is very important to me.	26	2.00	4.00	3.1154	.58835
I think I will be able to use what I learn in this course in my everyday life.	26	2.00	4.00	2.8462	.73170
I think the course material in this course is useful for me to learn how to speak English	26	2.00	4.00	2.8846	.65280
I am confident I can understand English and speak English to other people.	26	2.00	4.00	2.7692	.65163
I am certain I can learn how to speak English	26	2.00	4.00	2.8077	.69393

TABLE 13
COMPARING THE LEVEL OF LEARNING MOTIVATION OF EXPERIMENTAL GROUP- PRE AND POST-INTERVENTION

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	t	Sig. (2-tailed- p)
Exp. Pre-intervention	1.6291	10	.10079	-26.225	.000
Exp. Post-t intervention	2.8731	10	.11474		

The finding in Table 13 shows a significant difference between the control and the experiment groups, following the intervention. The finding validates the second hypothesis; as digital storytelling does improve learners' level of motivation to learn EFL.

TABLE 14
CORRELATING MOTIVATIONAL LEVEL TO SPEAKING SKILLS

Correlations			
		Motivation post-intervention	Speaking skills post-intervention
Motivation post-intervention	Pearson Correlation	1	.993**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.001
	N	10	5
Speaking skills post-intervention	Pearson Correlation	.993**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	
	N	5	5

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

There is a significant correlation between motivation and speaking skills following digital storytelling. These findings validate the third hypothesis.

V. DISCUSSION

The present research attempts to examine the role of digital storytelling in improving students' speaking abilities, as well as their motivational level of learning English as a foreign language. The main research question that the study answered was what is the role of digital storytelling in improving students' speaking skills? Does utilizing digital storytelling improve learners' motivational level of acquiring English as foreign a language?

The dependent variables were found to be significantly related ($P < 0.05$), and utilizing digital storytelling proved to be an efficient and effective way to enhance learners' speaking skills and level of learning motivation.

In light of the results, it is clear that the students in the experimental group did better than the students in the control group in post-treatment, both in speaking skills and learning motivation.

According to Badawi et al. (2022), such results are to be expected. During digital storytelling, argue the authors, words are not memorized but are received through spontaneous performances and social interaction among the students. As students convey their stories, digitally, her peers in the classroom do support the narrator; the person telling the story, thus creating interactions and discussion, which ultimately enhances both the narrator; and the audience, speaking skills. The positive environment, and the encouraging climate in the classroom, create a positive experience for all the participants, something that increases the learners' interest in learning EFL. The positive interaction, the spontaneous learning, and the autonomy that students experience in telling their stories, all add up to fostering students' motivation in learning EFL, as well as improving their speaking skills.

Badawi et al. (2022) examined the impact of using a digital storytelling approach on improving the speaking skills of primary school students. Similar to the findings in the current research, they reported that using digital storytelling enhances students' speaking skills and their level of motivation to learn EFL. Sixty elementary school students took part in their study, 30 participants for the experimental group and 30 others for the control group. The findings showed that students in the experimental group did better than those in the other group in post-treatment. Having participated in various speaking activities, participants in the experiment group were motivated to participate in group discussions, made corrections, and freely expressed their thoughts about their stories. The supporting surrounding raised learners' motivation, which was reflected by the higher scores they achieved following the treatment.

Kallinikou and Nicolaidou (2019) examined the impact of students' engagement in digital storytelling and how such engagement influences their speaking skills and motivation when learning a foreign language. As is the methodology of the present study, the researchers used a pre-test; and post-test control group design with two groups of 20 Russians who recently began to learn Greek as a foreign language.

A recent study by Nair and Yunus (2022) reported similar results to the ones in this study. The findings showed that the potential advantages of digital storytelling had a positive influence on students' speaking skills. Furthermore, the findings showed that digital storytelling engaged students in the content of the book not just by enhancing motivation and curiosity but also by adding confidence in their foreign language speaking skills. This means that electronic storytelling increases students' level of motivation, in addition, it increases students' level of self-confidence to study a foreign language. In their research, students were found to be more confident, and motivated to interact in English, thus developing their speaking skills.

Rajab's (2020) research has presented that digital storytelling is an effective tool to make educational environments

more attractive and exciting. He concluded that digital storytelling could be used as a tool for students in order to develop their speaking skills, especially in terms of accuracy, vocabulary, fluency, grammar, and comprehension. Moreover, the result of this study showed that the implementation of digital storytelling can enhance students' speaking skills in the English language.

Further support for the current findings is in Viknesh and Melor's (2021) study. According to the researchers, technological software and hardware are often used in schools to foster learning class environments. For both students and teachers, digital storytelling has evolved into a useful instructional instrument that can be used in the teaching and learning process.

Reviewing forty-five articles showed that most of these articles highlight the importance of digital storytelling as a contemporary teaching methodology. Most of these research papers provided empirical evidence that substantiated the advantages of employing digital storytelling in the classroom to help students interact more efficiently.

VI. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the current study, it can be concluded that digital storytelling is a useful pedagogical tool. It is very effective in helping teachers in guiding pupils to increase their speaking skills, as well as to increase pupils' desire of learning English as a foreign language. Despite the fact that students' scores were less than encouraging prior to the intervention plan of utilizing digital storytelling, following the intervention plan a significant increase in all the components of the speaking skills was witnessed. The intervention plan helped the students improve their overall speaking skills from an average of 11.03 (out of 25) to an average of 15.42. The increase in students' averages was significant, indicating the effectiveness of the intervention plan, and the effectiveness of utilizing digital storytelling to improve students' speaking skills.

Similarly, following the intervention plan, a significant increase in students' learning motivation was also achieved. Prior to the intervention plan, students showed little desire; or little motivation to learn EFL, as is indicated by the low average (1.6291) of their motivation prior to the intervention. However, following utilizing digital storytelling, the average increased to 2.8731, indicating a significant increase in students' desire to learn EFL. The findings suggest that digital storytelling is an effective approach to enhancing students' speaking skills as well as their learning motivation in EFL.

Having proved the pedagogical merits of using technology in learning, several questions remained to be answered, such as the level of teachers' qualifications in integrating pedagogical technology to enhance pupils' learning. Very often, teachers are not qualified, since they were not properly trained, in how to integrate technology into education. Teachers are not aware of the content of the technology, the content of pedagogy, or the knowledge of didactic, for the sake of efficiently integrating technology into education.

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