DIGITAL STORYTELLING-BASED TASKS ON SPEAKING CLASSROOM: SEEN FROM ESL LEARNERS' LENSES

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Abstract

Over the course of a decade, digital storytelling (DST) has earned a growing amount of attention as a strong instructional resource that has grabbed the interest of scholars. Digital storytelling (DST) has emerged as a promising pedagogical approach that could help moderate the usefulness of media in the classroom. Myriad studies have demonstrated the positive effects of digital storytelling (DST) on the students' language skills; however, these studies rarely include ESL students and their realistic depictions of everyday basis. To address the void, this quantitative study aimed to survey ESL students' point of view of DST-based task on speaking classroom. Relying on Anwar's (2016) TBLT approach instruction, the current study involving thirty-four students studying at Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin, Malaysia. The statistical evidence indicated ESL students perceive the implementation of digital storytelling-based tasks improves their motivation while allowing them to develop ideas and collaborate among groupmates. Implications and recommendations for future studies are discussed.

Keywords: DST, TBLT, ESL, ELT, Speaking Skills

INTRODUCTION

Due to the demands of 21st century skills, the need to be excellent in English language has been emphasized. There has been rising anxiety in the global education system, particularly in countries where English is taught as a second language (ESL) since more work is required (Rao, 2019). Given that, Malaysia is one of nations where English is taught formally as a second language. With regard to education, learning English has turned into an essential component of a student's education in the country in both secondary and tertiary institutions to help future non-native speakers of English overcome language barriers and become effective experts and professionals (Zhiping & Paramasivam, 2013). The year 2014 marked the beginning of Malaysia's implementation of 21st-century learning; Communication, cooperation, creative thinking, and critical analysis are

referred to the 4C's were highlighted as being among the most important components (Ahmad, 2017).

Although the country required all school-aged Malaysians for a minimum of seven years learning, the inability of Malaysian pupils to effectively communicate in English is still being recognized as a national crisis (Ansari, 2015; Aziz & Kashinathan, 2021). Speaking skills are considered to be the most challenging skills out of the four fundamental language skills that need to be demonstrated (Richard, 2008). The failure to speak English is cited by many Malaysian businesses as an excuse for why Malaysian graduates are unemployed. There are a number of students who, despite having studied English as a second language for an average of 11 years, have inadequate proficiency in spoken English (Aziz & Kashinathan, 2021). While most students did well on the English test, yet that does not imply that they can speak well; It is not hard to tell that ESL students rarely get to practice their language skills in real-world situations (Aziz & Kashinathan, 2021).

Krishnan et al (2012) declare that the country educational system, which emphasizes memorization of grammatical rules through the use of workbooks should be evaluated by curriculum designers and lawmakers. Students are missing out on a valuable opportunity to develop their communication skills in a context that more closely resembles the real world. Moreover, the teachers in the country as well still adhere to traditional teaching method such as providing grammar-based and teacher-centered classroom education; In the majority of cases, the ideas of English language teachers regarding how students might be taught to improve their oral communication abilities in the classroom have been rarely put into practice (Aziz & Kashinathan, 2021). As a result, English is seen as a topic where the mechanics of the language are emphasized rather than making links to how it is used in real-world contexts.

Taking this into account, refreshing teaching methods by introducing new pedagogical models that actively include students in the real-world context is crucial in today's competitive academic environment. To that end, digital storytelling (DST) has emerged as a promising pedagogical approach that could help to moderate the usefulness of such a variety of media in the classroom. Over the course of the last twenty years, digital storytelling (DST) has earned a growing amount of attention as a strong instructional resource that has grabbed the interest of teachers as well as students.

DST refers to the ability to use various forms of media, including images, audio, video, animation, and text, to create original stories that retold by the participants in order to hone their public speaking abilities (Abdelmageed & El-Naggar, 2018). Consequently, DST is an effective tool for teaching and learning languages since it helps students become more fluent speakers (Sudarmaji et al., 2020; Razmi et al., 2014; Yang et al., 2020). Moreover, Smeda et al (2014) stated that, as a form of inventive learning that integrates digital technology and narrative, digital storytelling can support the constructivist strategy for teaching in a second language.

Because of its pedagogical proficiency, a plethora of research have demonstrated the application of DST in the instruction of the four basic skills, such as in writing skills (Fitri, Husnawadi, & Harianingsih, 2021; Riani, Husnawadi, & Syarifudin, 2021; Sudarnaji, 2020; Husnawadi & Aziz, 2020), Listening skills (Basyoni & Seng, 2020; Tabieh, Al-Hileh, Afifa, & Abuzagha, 2020), reading skills (Abdel-Khalek, 2018; Garba, (2021), oral and speaking skills (Jaca, 2021; Riani et al., 2021; Yang, Chen, & Hung, 2020; Kallinikou & Nicolaidou, 2019; Elenein, 2019; Syafryadin, Haryani, Salniwati, & Putri, 2019). The merits results of those studies and other relevant research have also revealed the impact of digital storytelling (DST) on students' creative thinking skills (Jaca, 2021; Yang et al., 2020; Haryani et al., 2019; Zakaria & Aziz, 2019) and engage students' interest in the classroom (Kallinikou & Nicolaidou, 2019; Wei et al., 2018).

However, González (2017) asserts that if second language acquisition (SLA) principles are not followed, the use of technology in language classes will be less successful. Improper application of digital technology in the 4.0 industrial age can have unfavourable consequences for the educational system worldwide (Khusniyah & Hakim, 2019). In this case, few studies have reported on the integration of DST with SLA theories like Communicative Language Teaching and its subfield, task-based language learning (TBLT). Moreover, as far as the researcher is aware, no studies have examined the English for second language (ESL) learners' perceptions toward the mixture of digital storytelling and task-based language teaching (DST-based task). Therefore, the current study aimed to examine the ESL students' point of view toward the use of digital storytelling-based task.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT)

The Concept of TBLT

As one of the most often used techniques to L2 education, TBLT, one model of communicative language teaching (CLT), is increasingly essential (Crookes & Ziegler, 2021). It is stated that the TBLT is a cutting-edge strategy used in high schools, language institutes, and lower to advanced levels (Mutiarani & Rahman, 2019). The national curriculum has stipulated that theme-based language teaching be used as a novel instructional strategy that immerses students in "Highly Contextualized" language and subject-specific contexts (Tussa'diah & Nurfadillah, 2018). Such as Sabaruddin (2022) attains the TBLT as a pertinent learning approach in promoting EFL students' speaking proficiency.

TBLT is an effective instructional strategy in evolving students' speaking proficiency. Waluyo (2019) coheres that the concept of TBLT aids the instructor in controlling the classroom interaction that centers on the use

of English as a foreign language. Ulla (2020) underlines that the fundamental tenet of using TBLT is giving students the chance to actively engage and complete the assignment, which gives pupils a larger opportunity to utilize English in real-life situations. Indeed, Nita (2020) asserts that the use of TBLT in increasing speaking proficiency is effective since it stresses on speaking practices that includes utilizing English in the class, discussing, and negotiating their arguments during the task accomplishment.

The Utilization of TBLT

According to Anwar (2016), task-based teaching comprises of three prominent stages in terms of pre-task, during-task, and after-task. In the pre-task stage, the students will be shown a task to prepare students with the learning. In while-task, the students pick up the authentic task or activity from the learning. In the post-task, the students will address a reflection and repetition to reduce the errors. Indeed, Bryfonski (2019) affirms that the concern of TBTL is on task-based needs analysis, which identifies learners' needs for genuine language and the target tasks related to those needs.

Indeed, pertaining to DST-based tasks, the instruction will be built in the classroom emphasizing several phases both in-and-out doors. The DST video will be provided from the YouTube contents. In this regard, the task will be carried out with the three stages as entailed by Anwar (2016):

a. Pre-task

In this phase, students are given the topic that needs to discuss for speaking. This stage is initial activities whereby students prepare their speaking materials.

b. During-task

The students will be disclosed a sample of a digital story using the internet or YouTube platform. Then the students will be asked to compose a story about their personal experiences or related to daily activities.

c. Post-task

The instructor will go thoroughly to the students' works, particularly reviewing it before they bring it to the class for speaking.

Digital Storytelling

Numerous definitions exist for digital storytelling (DST), but they all main building on the idea of combining the art of storytelling with various forms of digital multimedia such as photographs, audio recordings, and videos; the term refers to a compilation of digital images, text, audio narratives, videos, and music intended to educate the reader about a specific subject (Robin, 2006). Typically, the tales serve a variety of functions, one of which is to share personal anecdotes. Despite the widespread adoption of multimedia tools, digital storytelling is not a recent phenomenon. As a co-founder of the Digital Storytelling Center (CDS), Joe Lambert is widely credited with creating the seven pillars that serve as a foundation for digital storytelling as bellows:

Picture 1. *Elements of DST*

According to Robin (2016), teaching students how to compose their own stories via digital storytelling can be an effective method. Students' imaginative capacities are developed through the story's digital application

as they begin to probe and share their own experiences, study a variety of facts and opinions via the library and the Internet, and delve deeply into a rich and profound material. Students who actively participate in the creation of digital stories, he argues, gain confidence in their public speaking abilities because they learn to structure their thoughts, pose questions, express their own perspectives, and build a tale. A student's emotional intelligence, teamwork, and social learning can all benefit from being exposed to constructive criticism from their peers.

Speaking Skills

Speaking skills play a crucial role in achieving success in all fields in today's globalized world. In addition, Rao (2019) stated that speaking skills are essential to acquire foreign or second language learning, and among the other four skills, speaking is considered the most important (Zaremba, 2006). Therefore, the demand for English-speaking mastery has skyrocketed (Nazara, 2011) because of English's growing importance as a language for international communication. According to Akhter et al. (2020), language is required to communicate ideas, emotions, and thoughts. Language is used to communicate people's problems. Language is the splendor of life. Speech is required to complete the communication task. As a result, speech is essential for communication. Because of the importance of speaking ability, English Language Learner students (ELL) work hard to master the productive ability.

Recently, all educational institutions have attempted to promote this skill, beginning in elementary school (Goh, 2007). As explained by Boonkit (2010), It is a pity that ELLs find themselves unable to produce English properly after spending several years in educational institutions. Their poor communication skills cause numerous problems. They cannot find suitable employment with one another and cannot communicate their positions with native speakers. Additionally, Akhter (2020) explained that there were some advantages to the speaking ability of ELLs. They participate in all classroom

activities in the form of groups or pairs. They can speak on any subject assigned to them. They can give good speeches and participate in debates. Their ability to speak promotes their thinking. It broadens their knowledge through interaction with foreigners.

Nazara (2010) also demonstrated that the internet allows ELLs to form positive relationships with people worldwide. ELLs can expand their businesses by locating additional companies in the global market. It is only possible for them if they can persuade others through their speaking abilities. With practical speaking skills, the interviewee can capture the interviewers' attention. It increases the speakers' self-assurance. Speaking skill provides many benefits to speakers, and ESL/EFL instructors should emphasize the importance of developing this skill. To accomplish this, they should abandon traditional methods in favor of cutting-edge techniques.

Despite those advantages, learning speaking skills have been regarded as challenging skills among other skills (Paneerselvam, 2019; Aziz & Kashinathan 2021). As Bueno, Madrid, and Mclaren (2006: 321) stated, "Speaking is one of the most difficult skills language learners have to face." Even after years of studying the language, learners find it challenging to speak when required. Because students must produce sentences on the spur of the moment, it is easier for foreign or second language learners to produce sentences after learning the grammatical structures and having adequate vocabulary knowledge (Khamkhien, 2010). As a result, EFL/ESL learners face numerous challenges when speaking grammatical sentences in English. Because speaking skills are necessary for communication, people strive to learn them to communicate effectively with the entire global community (Rao,2019).

Nonetheless, modernity requires communication skills for learners, and English teachers must teach the EFL/ESL learners the necessary skills to enhance their speaking skills and perform well in actual life (Rao, 2018; Rao, 2019). Oral skills are completely ignored in today's EFL/ESL teaching

environment, although employability depends more on communication than technology (Paneerselvam, 2019). After realizing the significance of oral communication skills, more emphasis is now placed on developing the speaking skills of learners in order for them to complete their studies and excel in their fields once they have completed their education.

Several strategies can be used to improve speaking skills in the EFL/ESL classroom. All teachers should abandon their old teaching methods instead of new ones. They should create an environment where students can engage in oral activities to improve their speaking skills. English teachers use various techniques to help EFL students improve their speaking skills. Many students avoid speaking English because they are afraid of making mistakes. They should be encouraged to speak freely and without hesitation. Role-playing is also beneficial. It is the best activity to present to EFL/ESL students to improve their speaking skills. The teacher's role is to divide the students into groups and pair them up.

Bailey (2005) and Goh (2007) describe strategies for improving one's speaking ability. They argue that the syllabus should be carefully designed, the teaching method should be changed, and new tasks and materials should be introduced in the classroom to improve speaking skills. Aside from that, a speaking assessment task should be planned.

METHODOLOGY

A questionnaire was administered to the sample of the population under study. Students from 6th semester that consist of 34 undergraduate students taking Public Speaking course at University Sultan Zainal Abidin Malaysia were asked to participate. The questionnaire was designed in both English and Bahasa to ensure that everyone, regardless of their proficiency in English, would be able to read and fill it out correctly. The questionnaires consist of 15 questions asking students about their point of view during the intervention of DST-based task on a five-points scale adopting the Likert

Scale from '1' (*strongly disagree*) to '5' (*strongly agree*). Two academic experts in digital storytelling and quantitative approaches were consulted for their thoughts on the clarity and appropriateness of the questionnaire before to administration in order to make some modest adjustments that would increase its validity. The data then was analyzed by SPSS V.26.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In order to interpret the students' viewpoint of the implementation of Digital storytelling-based task on speaking class, this study referred to Interpretation table used by (Abragan, 2021)

Table 1.

Mean interval score and interpretation of students' perception by Abragan (2021)

Scale	Range	Interpretation
5	4.20-5.00	Certainly Positive
4	3.40-4.19	Rather Positive
3	2.60-3.39	Neither
2	1.80-2.59	Rather Negative
1	1.00-1.79	Certainly Negative

Table 2.

Descriptive Statistics of students' responses seen from mean and St. Deviation

No.	Question	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
1	Digital storytelling-based task enhances my speaking performance	34	4.56	0.561	Certainly Positive
2	Digital storytelling-based task motivated me to study beyond the classroom	34	4.32	0.806	Certainly Positive
3	Digital storytelling makes me curious about the subject taught in the speaking class	34	4.32	0.878	Certainly Positive
4	Using digital storytelling-based task helps me to have a deeper understanding of the digital	34	4.56	0.660	Certainly Positive

	content				
5	Digital storytelling-based task helps to enhance collaboration among friends	34	4.68	0.589	Certainly Positive
6	Digital storytelling-based task provides me the opportunity to think creatively and critically	34	4.65	0.597	Certainly Positive
7	Digital storytelling-based task encourages me to actively engage in conversation and discussion beyond the classroom	34	4.53	0.662	Certainly Positive
8	Digital storytelling-based task makes me more engaged in the lesson	34	4.44	0.786	Certainly Positive
9	Digital storytelling-based task motivates me towards openness and courage to explore new things	34	4.71	0.524	Certainly Positive
10	Digital storytelling-based task makes the learning atmosphere more enjoyable	34	4.53	0.748	Certainly Positive
11	Digital storytelling-based task makes me happy with the learning activity	34	4.44	0.786	Certainly Positive
12	I have a great experience learning using digital storytelling-based tasks	34	4.32	0.768	Certainly Positive
13	I enjoy doing the tasks given when making digital storytelling	34	4.18	0.999	Rather Positive
14	Studying with digital storytelling-based task improved my speaking performances	34	4.59	0.557	Certainly Positive
15	I will suggest the use of digital storytelling-based tasks for future use in English speaking classroom	34	4.50	0.707	Certainly Positive

Based on table 1. The students gave two responses. Out of 15 question items, 14 were rated as certainly positive, and the remaining one was rather positive. This finding was consistent with the prior study by (Fitri et al., 2021; Riani et al., 2021; Aziz & Husnawadi, 2020) which showed the majority of the students perceived the implementation of DST-based task positively.

Furthermore, seen from the three most high-rated items was question number 9. *"Digital storytelling-based task motivates me towards openness and courage to explore new things",* (M= 4.71, SD=0.524), number *5 "Digital storytelling-based task helps to enhance collaboration among friends,"* (M=4.68, SD=0.589) and number 6 *"Digital storytelling-based task provides me the opportunity to think creatively and critically,"* (M= 4.65, SD=0.597).

This finding indicated that implementing digital storytelling-based tasks improves students' motivation while allowing them to develop ideas and collaborate among learners. The improvement of students' learning motivations was consistent with the previous study (i.e., Zakaria & Aziz, 2019; Aziz & Husnawadi, 2020; Wei et al, 2018). Aziz & Husnawadi (2020) asserted that digital storytelling-based tasks increase motivation and interpersonal relationships. Simultaneously, Wei et al (2018) promoted that during the instructional process the student's interests were increased as well as they were motivated to practice their English. Whilst, the research by Zakaria and Aziz (2019) also stated a positive outcome where digital storytelling inspires students to study as it help them learn the target language.

In addition, the item that received the lowest endorsement from the participant was question number 13, *"I enjoy doing the tasks given when making digital storytelling"* (M=4.18, SD=0. 999). This finding indicated that students admit digital storytelling-based tasks benefit them psychologically, where they perceive enjoyable feelings when doing the task. Yang et al (2020) suggesting that digital storytelling gives meaningful contexts which empower the target language outcome of students. Also, Anggeraini (2017) explained that digital storytelling was indicated as appropriate media in learning which can be seen from online reading sources and videos, including video words and clips.

IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSION

The current study was conducted to reveal ESL students' point of view of DST-based task on speaking classroom in Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin, Malaysia. A quantitative survey research was adopted to examine the students' perceptions. Following the examination and discussion of the data, statistical data revealed that students perceived the implementation of digital storytelling-based tasks improves their learning motivation while allowing them to develop ideas and collaborate among learners. In the other words, the use of digital storytelling-based task has proven to be effective to boost ESL students' interest to learn on speaking classroom. Therefore, this study is hoped to provide insight for both students and teachers. It is crucial for them to understand the relevance of English and technological skills like DST and other technological aids to study English in today's world. This study also might be beneficial for future research, in the field of speaking skills and technology-enhanced language learning, where research in a new educational environment, say, EFL context, could shed light on a potentially interesting topic.

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