



Exploring the Digital Storytelling for Enhancing Learners Engagement in English Language Classrooms

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Abstract

Digital storytelling (DST) integrates multimedia elements such as text, images, audio, and video to create interactive learning environments that enhance learner engagement in English language classrooms. While previous studies highlight its benefits for motivation, participation, and language development, differences across learner levels and learning contexts remain underexplored. This study examined the effects of digital storytelling on students' motivation, classroom participation, and the development of listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. A quantitative research design was employed, and data were collected through a self-administered questionnaire from 400 students at primary, secondary, and tertiary levels. The survey measured motivation, participation and interaction, language skill development, and students' perceptions of DST. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze trends in engagement and skill improvement. The results indicated that DST positively influenced student motivation, with moderate improvements in intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, enjoyment, and self-efficacy. Students demonstrated increased active participation and collaboration, although social interaction varied among individuals. Reading showed the strongest improvement among language skills, followed by moderate gains in speaking and writing, while listening improved steadily. Overall, students reported moderate satisfaction and perceived learning value, with some variation in confidence when using digital tools. The findings suggest that digital storytelling is an effective instructional approach for fostering motivation, participation, and meaningful language development in English classrooms.

Keywords: *Digital Storytelling; Student Engagement; Language Skills Development; Motivation; Participatory Learning*

1. Introduction

Learning English is not only learning grammar, vocabulary but also learning cultural sense, the way of using language and global understanding. Technology is key to this, hosting interactive and personalized learning experiences through digital tools, virtual exchanges and mobile apps that allow learners to engage with a variety of cultural perspectives (Hossain, 2024). A positive classroom atmosphere, full of emotional support, respect and warmth is essential for student motivation. A toxic or intimidating class atmosphere, on the contrary, can dampen learning enthusiasm. Teachers have to reconsider themselves and through introspection they need to emphasize their emotional- cognitive dimension of their profession besides their pedagogic skills and taking account the cognitive function (Ye, 2024). Intrinsic motivation is a key factor involving students in digital devices. However, things like oral reading tend not to generate high levels of engagement compared with more interactive and personalized methods such as incorporating AI tools. AI technologies, even though supportive, had less motivational power than oral reading sessions with instant and interpersonal feedback (Alfaleh et al., 2025). Digital storytelling has been described as a multimodal approach that combines personal stories with digital media such as video, images, sound and text. Common in community education, this approach has been adopted to mainstream pedagogy as it aligns with constructivist learning theory, where knowledge is constructed by learners instead of being delivered passively (Thomas & Manalil, 2025). Multimedia learning, which means in the process of studying, involves text, image, audio and video elements, has been shown to be an effective approach that enhances students' attention and understanding. "Education 4.0 tools promote adaptable self-pace learning which increases motivation and engagement. They were also intrigued by the "hands-on" aspect of learning: assessment in the moment and talking to native speakers (Dhivya et al., 2023). Using interactive platforms, video lectures, VR experience-based learning program and gamified tasks are effective in enhancing the achievement of learners. Student activity increases by using multimedia tools, thus promoting more attractive and interactive learning. They equally improved all language subskills (speaking, listening, reading and writing), indicating that multimedia aids the development of language in a more holistic way. Integrating multimedia with conventional resources contributes to a more personalized and efficient learning environment (Boiko et al., 2025). There are three strong forces that drive student engagement: student self- regulation, an empathetic teacher, and the learning environment. The reasons for the selection of these factors were that their influence had little shown in research. Self-regulation indirectly highest student engagement through emotion and academic self-efficacy. Similarly, teacher empathy is also found to facilitate favorable teacher-student interactions that enhance student engagement. The instructional setting has a likewise intricate relationship, facilitating engagement both directly and indirectly by means of constructs such as self-efficacy (Q. Wang, 2025). Student participation rates rose when students are actively using the gamification elements – points, leaderboards, badges and gamified tests. This engagement is not just behavioral (e.g., students logged in more), but also cognitive and affective, with students reporting greater curiosity, enjoyment, and challenge. As the engagement grew, students progressed from initially being confused or resisting to becoming increasingly engaged and goal-directed (Rahayu et al., 2022). Based on the background therefore, the main aim of the study is to investigate how the use of digital storytelling as a pedagogical tool influences learner engagement in English language classrooms, particularly in terms of students' motivation, participation, and language skill development.

2. Literature Review

Digital storytelling (DST) has become an increasingly popular approach in language classrooms because it allows students to learn through stories combined with digital media. Many studies show that this method helps learners become more engaged, motivated, and actively involved in the learning

process. By encouraging creativity and interaction, digital storytelling also supports the development of students' overall English language skills. Yu and Wang (2025) found that participation in DST resulted in observable enhancements to English oral language skills (particularly, narration, writing, vocabulary usage, and pronunciation) and digital storytelling skills (video editing, animation production, sound production integration and communication platform use). Motivation of learner's High motivation leads to higher confidence, and greater self-sufficiency in collaborative DST activities. The key to engagement and learning is working together. Participants find technical, linguistic and pedagogical tensions in the multimodal story-making processes but collaborative problem-solving to overcome such divergences resulted. In the process, learning goes beyond the specific applications (language and computer skills) to stimulate creativity, critical thinking, self-esteem and professional development. Ajabshir (2024) also viewed that DST purposefully involves learners on several dimensions behavioral, cognitive, affective, and agentive. They were task-engaged, investing cognitive effort into planning and revising narratives; they were personally involved in their stories and emotionally implicated in them; and, above all, they were actively engaged, making authorial decisions about what to learn and how to write creatively. It is this forceful agentive involvement that has been discussed as a characteristic strength of DST, which allows learners to take charge of their own learning rather than being passive recipients. Besides, Gita et al.,(2025) also found that digital storytelling works by taking on students as active learners in comparison to passive receivers, which enhances engagement with better academic and metacognitive functions like planning skill reflection, and critically thinking. The former is carried out by associating language learning to real-life, meaningful situations through increasing motivation while the latter helps learners' express emotions and reduces language anxiety. Behaviorally, students gradually become more independent, active and self-controlled. Namaziandost and Çelik (2025) presented that there is a significant improvement in EFL student involvement and performance when digital storytelling (DST) is combined with systematically raising task difficulty. Learners in the DST condition demonstrated more engagement, motivation, and involvement, which was manifested in a combination of actual changes of language practice (e.g., better pronunciation) and positive growth mindset. DST provides a supportive and meaningful and cognitively demanding learning environment because language learners are more motivated to invest their efforts, face challenges and take a view on the developability of language. Another study by Wang et al., (2025) showed that in comparison with tablet-based storytelling or, in some aspects, even human-led storytelling social robot based digital storytelling is superior. Children who engaged with the social robot during the storytelling activity had significantly better levels of attention acquisition through the entire task, which suggests that embodied digital storytellers are particularly good at capturing and maintaining young learners' attention.

The findings of studies such as that of Yu and Wang (2025), Ajabshir (2024), are evidence the case for DST contributing to different language skills, particularly speaking, writing etc., among others; however these studies do not focus on how DST impact on teaching/learning language with regard to levels variability and technology accessibility. This is the gap that my research seeks to bridge by making an inquiry into how DST affects learners' engagement in English classes, especially their motivation and participation as well as their language improvement. To our knowledge, previous research has not investigated how individual differences (e.g., tech-savviness, communication styles) might affect social interaction during DST activities. It also examines the effects of DST on learners at different grade and proficiency levels, providing information to guide teachers in modifying tasks based on individual learners. In addition, my research emphasizes emotional and cognitive dimension of engagement such as a decrease in language anxiety and increased self-confidence derived from DST. These results are intended to contribute to a broader view on the potential of DST in strengthening personalized and effective learning for ELLs.

2.1 Research Questions

To better understand how digital storytelling works in real classroom settings, this study explores its influence on students' learning experiences. The following research questions are designed to guide the study by focusing on students' motivation, participation, and language skill development:

1. How does the use of digital storytelling in English language classrooms affect students' motivation and participation?
2. In what ways does digital storytelling contribute to the development of students' language skills, such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing?

2.2 Objectives

1. The specific objectives of the study guide the analytical focus and facilitate a comprehensive understanding of the study's core concepts:
2. To examine the effects of digital storytelling on students' motivation in learning English.
3. To examine how digital storytelling contributes to the active participation and interaction of students in English class.
4. To investigate the use of digital storytelling for enhancing listening, speaking, reading and writing skills.

To examine students' perspectives and experiences of employing Digital Storytelling as a learning tool in the English language class.

3. Theoretical Framework

Digital Storytelling (DST) reflects the principles of Constructivist Learning Theory with its emphasis on active, knowledge construction. In DST, students develop narratives through multiple modalities including text, images and sound in such a way that they can interact deeply with the content going from consumers to producers. This process is enabling students to tune cognitive conflicts, a fundamental constructivist principle and synthesize new knowledge with the old one (Kieu Oanh & Hong Nhung, 2022). DST also promotes motivation by offering students autonomy in developing their stories (cf., Vygotsky's ZPD: Zone of Proximal Development), which guarantees that tasks are challenging but not too much. So, DST is also a cooperative working environment, which encourages motivation and social learning, though which student can share ideas, solve problems together and co-construct knowledge. It exercises the cognitive and social aspects of learning, and as such is stimulating and empowering. It is a strong point of DST to involve all four language skills speaking, listening, reading and writing. It promotes the natural process of language development, where learners tell, write, read and reflect using the language. We draw on Kolb's experiential learning cycle, using time and place not only for teaching, but to generate reflective moments. Finally, DST privileges the students with agency over their learning and decisions related to their stories, content, and presentations. This follows the aims of an agency for developing ownership of learning that prizes critical thinking and creativity. Therefore, DST is not just a tool for language learning but also a constructivist approach to fostering learners' motivation, engagement and active participation.

4. Methodology

This study utilizes the form of quantitative research in order to explore that use of digital story telling (DST) on students' engagement in English classes. The participants are 400 students of primary, secondary and tertiary level. Out of the 400 respondents, 282 (70.6%) are males and 118 (29.5%) are females. Participants are also divided by age: 35% of participants are between 10-14 years, 35% between

15-19 and the rest (30%) have reported their age as being between 20-24 years. Respondents' experience with digital storytelling tools ranges from advanced to unspecified, as reflected by the distribution of responses at different levels of expertise throughout the survey.

A self-administered survey was used to gather data, and a number of closed-ended questions in relation to four main variables were used: motivation, participation; language development (speaking, listening, reading and writing) and students' views on the use of digital technology in the classroom. The motivation construct consists of four sub variables, as follows: intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, perceived enjoyment and self-efficacy toward learning English via DST. The survey also assesses engagement of students in classroom activities including active and collaborative participation and socializing through DST. The development of language skills evaluates the influence of DST on students' speaking/listening and reading/writing. In addition, students' perception about the use of DST tools is assessed by questions in perceived learning value, ease of use, overall satisfaction and confidence with the use of DST tools. This study uses Cochran's formula to determine that the sample size used is large enough to be able to collect accurate information (with consideration of 400 samples as an adequate number) from respondents. Central tendencies and spread on responses were reported via descriptive statistics (mean, median and standard deviation) on quantitative data. The findings were reported in form of figures showing the distribution of students' responses on constructions. This method offers an objective, numerical indication of how DST affects motivation, participation and language learning.

5. Results and Discussion

This section presents the findings of the study based on quantitative data collected from 400 students. Descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, mean, median, and standard deviation) were used to analyze students' perceptions of digital storytelling in relation to motivation, participation, language skill development, and overall learning experience. The results are organized according to the research objectives and presented using tables and figures to clearly illustrate key patterns and trends.

5.1 Demographic Information

This table summarizes the demographic characteristics and learning backgrounds of the participants, including gender, age group, grade level, prior experience with digital storytelling, and learning focus. The distribution provides an overview of the sample composition, offering context for interpreting students' perceptions and experiences with digital storytelling in language learning.

Table 1: Demographic Information

		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	282	70.6%
	Female	118	29.5%
Age Group	10-14	140	35%
	15-19	140	35%
	20-24	120	30%
Grade Level	Primary School	152	38%
	Secondary School	118	29.5%
	University Level	130	32.5%
Previous Experience with Digital Storytelling	Advanced	110	27.5%
	Basic Experience	100	25%
	Intermediate	101	25.3%
	No Experience	89	29.3%
Learning Focus	Other Academic Focus	210	52.5%

	Language Learning	190	47.5%
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The Table 1 shows the demographic profile and history of life exposure to the participants. In relation to sex, most of the respondents are male, 70.6% of the sample, and females account for 29.5%. The age classification is quite balanced, 35 % of the seekers are between 10 and 14 years old, another one third is in the range of 15-19 years, and still nearly a third in the group 20-24. About grade level: 38% of participants are in primary schools, 32.5% at universities, and 29.5% in secondary schools. In terms of prior experience with DST, 27.5% have advanced levels of prior experience, 25% have basic level experiences, 25.3% had intermediate experiences and 29.3% has no prior experience in it.. Finally, in the learning focus, 52.5% of learners are learning other academic subjects and 47.5% learn language. This distribution underscores the heterodox origins and expertise backgrounds of different perspectives that may apply, with a fidelity, to differing uses of digital storytelling in education.

5.2 Examine the Effects of Digital Storytelling on Students' Motivation in Learning English

The Figure 1 shows the descriptive statistics mean, median, and standard deviation for four constructs: intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, perceived enjoyment, and self-efficacy in learning English. The close alignment of mean and median values indicates consistent responses, while the standard deviations show a moderate level of variation among participants.

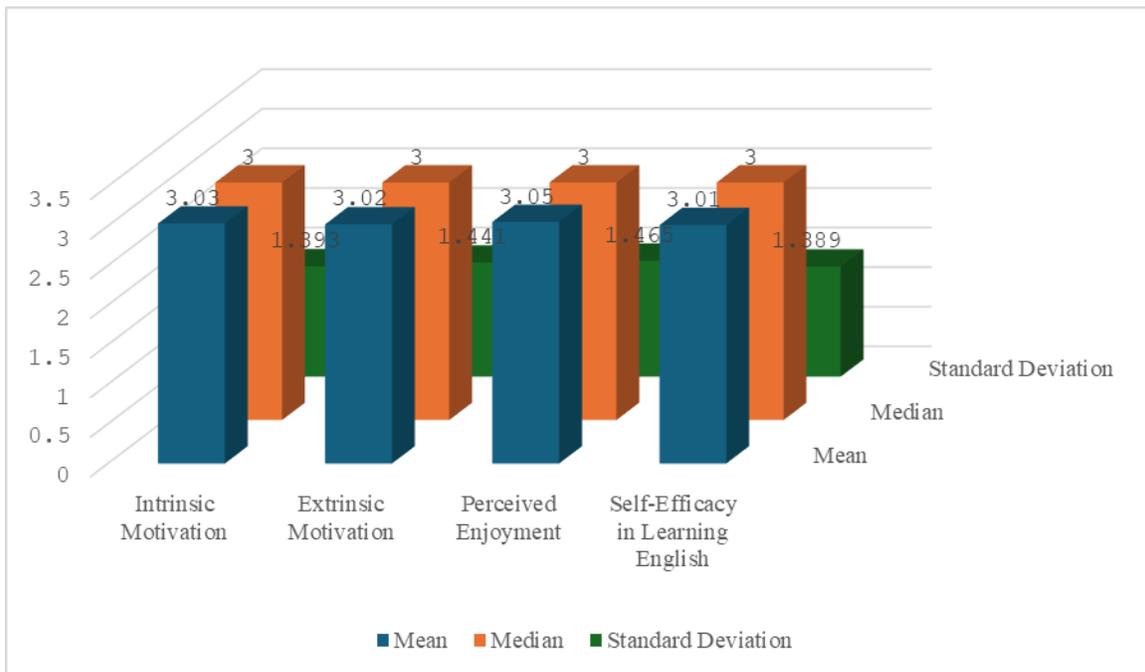


Figure 1: Effects of Digital Storytelling on Motivation in Learning English

The figure 1 indicates the descriptive statistics, including mean, median and standard deviation in four motivation constructs towards learning English through digital storytelling which are Intrinsic Motivation, Extrinsic Motivation, Perceived Enjoyment and Self-Efficacy in Learning English. As an entirety, average levels of the four constructs of interest are close to 3.0 (ranging from about 3.01 to 3.05), suggesting medium and moderate-high motivation and engagement from students. The median value is constantly equal to 3 along any axis, which means students' responses are roughly balanced and centrally distributed, without strong skewness. The relatively small standard deviation values (about 1.38–1.46) mean moderate diversity was perceived by students. This indicates that in the context of distributed digital storytelling, although most students perceive that positive motivational outcomes emerge as a result, there are still differences between individuals which probably stem from being experienced, proficiency levels or learning setting. This is consistent with earlier findings. collected and

organized the data, Perera analyzed the data." Impact of digital storytelling on increasing learners' motivation and engagement levels other studies such as Yu and Wang (2025) and Ajabshir (2024) reported that digital storytelling promotes learners' motivation, enjoyment, active involvement in multimodal tasks, collaborative work. These positive self-efficacy results are in line with Gita et al. (2025), who emphasized less anxiety and higher confidence on the part of students with digital storytelling. Similarly, Namaziandost and Çelik (2025) indicated greater motivation and engagement in DST-informed instruction while Wang et al. (2025) highlighted its efficacy in maintaining attention and engagement. In sum, the findings confirm that digital storytelling favorably serves the motivational and affective aspects of learning English as previous literature indicates.

5.3 Contributions of Digital Storytelling to the Active Participation and Interaction of Students in English Class

Figure 2 compares students' perceptions across four learning dimensions using mean, median, and standard deviation. Results show stable and consistent perceptions for active participation, collaboration, and engagement, while social interaction in digital storytelling exhibits greater variability, indicating more diverse student experiences.

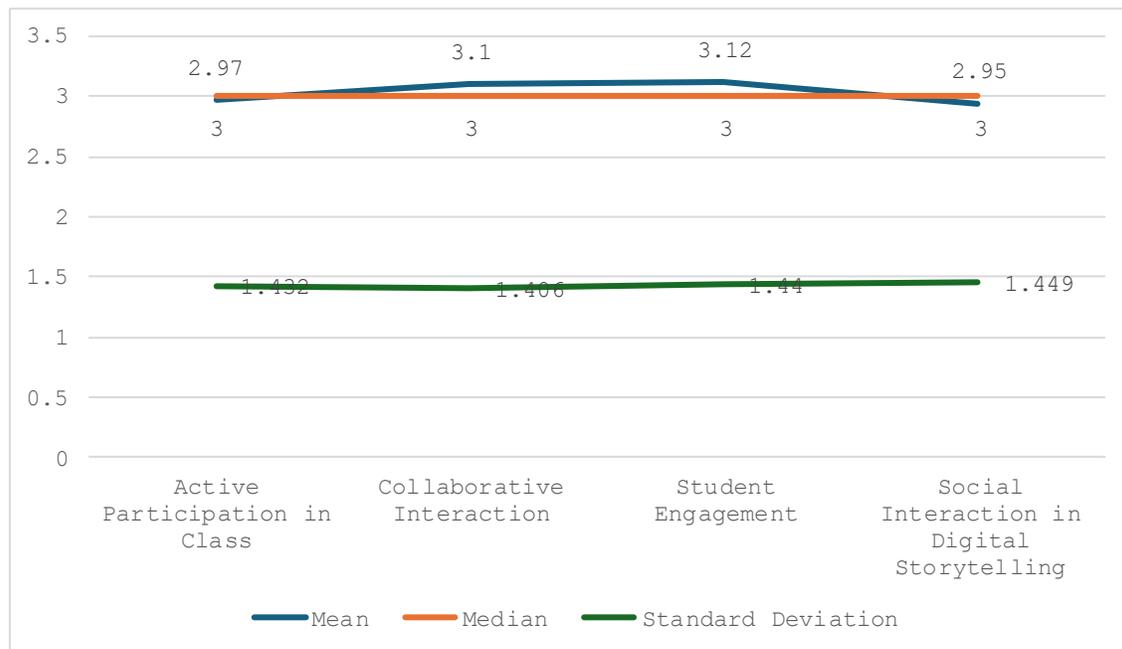


Figure 2: Digital Storytelling and Students' Participation and Interaction in English Class

Figure 2 shows moderate and reliable levels of participation and engagement are showed by the graph for each four dimensions of classroom interaction. The average means of active participation, collaborative interaction and overall student engagement fall between 2.97and3.12, with a consistent median of 3, indicating overall positive and equal perceptions in being involved with digital storytelling–enriched privileged experiences -- acts cunningly fuzzer here! The dispersion of these three factors is low (about 1.40–1.44), showing that the response of learners are relatively stable. On the other hand, social interaction in digital storytelling presents a higher standard deviation, indicating wider variability in how learners feel social presence of peers while story telling online here possibly affected by levels of tech-savviness, preferred communication styles or group composition.

These results are very similar to previous studies. Yu and Wang (2025) concluded that digital storytelling improves collaborative interaction and participation in shared narrative making. Likewise,

Ajabshir (2024) believed that DST fosters behavioural and agentive engagement which is also displayed in the constant nature of meanscores for participation and collaboration. The weak but non-zero levels of engagement can also be seen in Gita et al. (2025) found that DST promotes social interaction, autonomy and decrease anxiety, although the type of social engagement varies among individuals. In addition, Namaziandost and Çelik (2025) found higher levels of learner participation and motivation in DST-supported instruction, which is consistent with these engagement patterns. Lastly, the spread of social contacts is in agreement with Wang et al. (2025), noted that digital storytelling environments have a high potential to effectively maintain attention and participation, but that learners may react differently according to the mode and context of interaction. In sum, the graph corroborates research findings of how digital storytelling is successful in enhancing participation.

5.4 Digital Storytelling for Enhancing Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing Skills

Figure 3 illustrates students' perceptions of language skill improvement through digital storytelling, focusing on writing, reading, listening, and speaking skills. Mean, median, and standard deviation values are presented to show overall trends and variability in responses. The results indicate generally consistent perceptions across all four skills, with moderate variability, suggesting that digital storytelling supports balanced development of language skills among students.

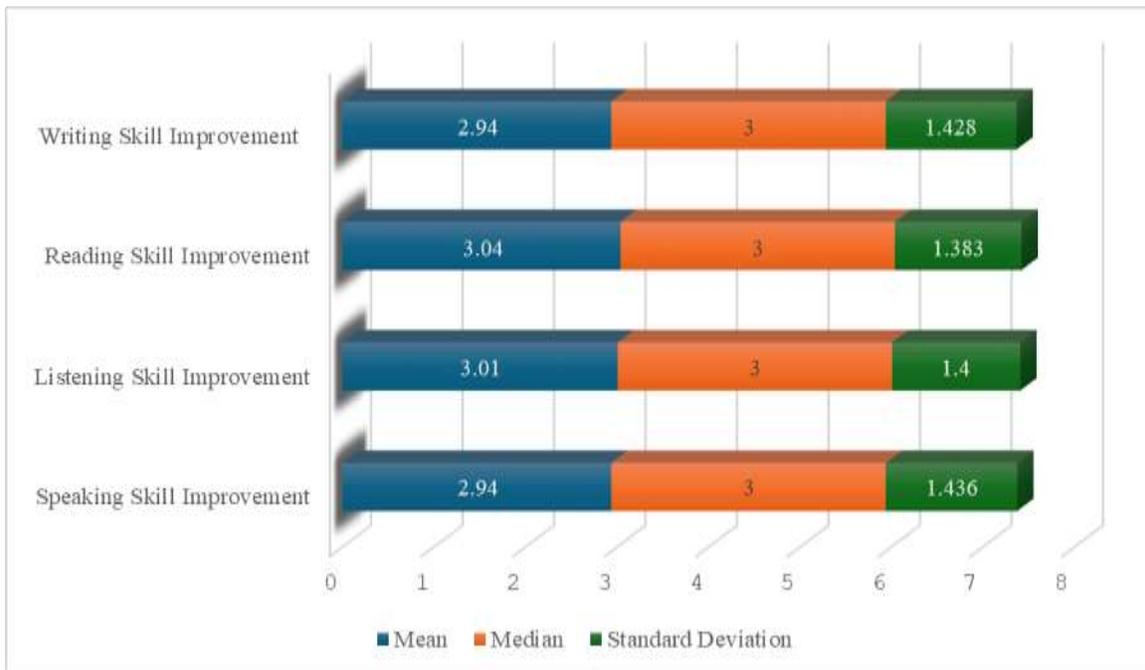


Figure 3: Digital Storytelling and Language Skill Development

The chart 3 describes a distribution of change in language (English) skills– Writing, Reading, Listening and Speaking – based on mean, median and standard deviation. The speaking and writing skills improve at a moderate speed with mean scores at 2.94, but they vary greatly; standard deviations are about 1.4. Highest mean score by far is reading, with a 3.04 reading and not very much variability across the year so it's consistently improving. Listening skills also impact positively with a mean number of 3.01 and medium variability. These results are in line with what is already reported about DST in the literature. Research (Yu & Wang, 2025) also indicates that DST facilitates oral language proficiency to be consistent with positive effects for writing and speaking. Ajabshir (2024) emphasized the cognitive and emotional involvement of DST, consistent with erotica variation for writing and speaking. Gita et al. (2025) observed that DST lessens anxiety and, as result, leads to more stable reading and listening progress. Namaziandost and Çelik (2025) also reported enhanced students' performance and engagement

using DST, which appears to be evident among all skills here. Wang et al. (2025) underlined DST’s capacity to hold attention, which can account for the gains in listening and reading. In general, the graph validates that DST is effective for promoting language learning and motivation as found in literature.

5.5 Students’ Perspectives and Experiences of Employing Digital Storytelling as a Learning Tool in the English Language Class

Figure 4 presents students’ perceptions of digital storytelling in terms of learning value, ease of use, overall satisfaction, and confidence. Mean, median, and standard deviation values are shown to summarize response trends and variability. The results indicate generally positive and consistent perceptions across the first three aspects, while confidence in using digital storytelling shows greater variability, suggesting differing levels of comfort among students.

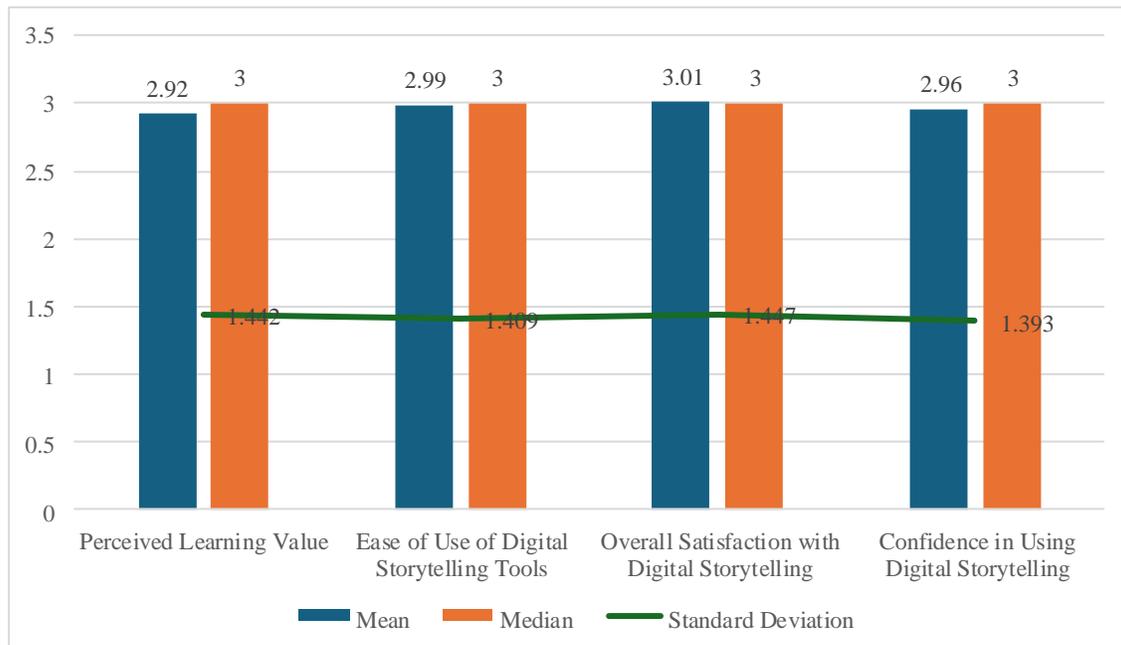


Figure 4: Students’ Perspectives on Using Digital Storytelling in the English Class

Learners' perceptions of DST on 4 dimensions, i.e., Perceived Learning Value, Ease of Use, Overall Satisfaction, and Confidence in Using DST are plotted on the graph. a moderate perceived learning value and ease of use as reported by learners (mean =2.92 and mean = 2.99, respectively) with a moderate variation (standard deviation ~1.4). Overall satisfaction with DST tools was also moderate (M = 3.01) demonstrating relatively positive but not outstanding experiences with the tools. However, confidence in the use of DST tools scored an average of 5.0 (considerably higher than writing ability with broad variation) showing that some learners were very confident and some very unconfident. These results are consistent with previous work. According to Yu and Wang (2025) DST can increase student engagement and motivation, thus complementing the moderate learning value and satisfaction among learners in this study. Ajabshir (2024)) emphasized the cognitive and emotional involvement of learners in DST which could be the basis for moderate user-friendliness and satisfaction. Gita et al. (2025) the role of DST in eliciting confidence, which is compatible with the high fluctuation in confidence. Namaziandost and Çelik (2025) reported that DST leads to “increased involvement” as indicated by high satisfaction scores. Wang et al. (2025) likewise stated that DST sustains learner interest, thus explaining the generally positive but diverse perceptions of confidence and satisfaction.

6. Findings

Experimenting with digital storytelling (DST) has a moderate to high impact on the level of motivation in learning English. The means of the 4 constructs (Intrinsic Motivation, Extrinsic Motivation, Perceived Enjoyment and Self-Efficacy) are all distributed evenly, with their average scores being nearly equal to 3.0 which demonstrates that DST promotes students' motivation; however, differences exist among individuals because of proficiency levels and learning contexts.

Digital storytelling has been seen to have a positive contribution on the students' active participation and interaction in class. The means of the criterion items Actively participating in learning (ranking 2.97 – 3.12) and collaborating/communicating with others for learning (ranking 1.91 -1.8 4) indicated that students are actively using technology to engage in meaningful activities, however there was more variability among the answers for social interaction which showed that individual tech-savvy and communication approaches played a role.

Language Skills Enhancement: DST significantly improve the language skills, such as listening, speaking, reading and writing. Reading skills displayed the most linear pattern of improvement with a mean score of 3.04, while speaking and writing showed moderate amounts of change across fluctuations in both time and individual scores.

Perceptions on a 5-point Likert scale, students had moderate satisfaction towards the use of DST tools (mean = 3.01) and confidence in using DST tools ranged significantly among students; between low and very low confidence to high levels mean = 5.0. It implies that although students have a positive perception of the DSTs, there are variations in their self confidence in using the tools.

Behavioral, cognitive and emotional engagement are the domains for engagement where students participating in digital storytelling will find success. DST students experience more curiosity, enjoyment and challenge compared to others, and being involved in the construction of narrative seems to be a confidence-building feature which lowers language anxiety according to other research that reported beneficial effects of DST on engagement and self-efficacy.

7. Recommendations

1. **Regular Integration of DST:** Regular use of digital storytelling in English classes contributes to increase student motivation & active involvement as well as better language skills development.
2. **Train teachers:** Empower teachers in their ability to use DST tools have training alongside students' learners should feel confident with the acquisition of these tools.
3. **DST Tasks to Different Proficiency Levels:** Adjust digital storytelling tasks for each proficiency level so that the students are motivated but not so challenged that they find the work frustrating.
4. **Foster Collaboration and Social Learning:** Develop DST tasks with a focus on working in groups, encouraging peer interaction from which collaborative learning or productive group work can be derived for increased engagement.
5. **Facilitate Emotional and Cognitive Engagement:** Make your classroom an environment in which learners can approach English with both their hearts and minds, lower the effect of language anxiety, and develop stronger self-confidence to using English.

8. Limitations

The study has several limitations. Note that our sample size (400 students) perhaps not accurately reflect all demographics, it was predominantly male and distribution of prior experience with digital storytelling fluctuated. Also, this study merely offers a snapshot of engagement and lacks longitudinal data to evaluate sustained effects on student engagement. Variations in students' access to technology and

experience with digital tools could have affected their participation as not all students were equally resourced or skilled. Self-reported data are susceptible to bias, including inaccurate self-perception or social desirability. Last, variability in digital storytelling implementation across teachers may influence the reliability and efficacy of this approach, potentially compromising the extent toward which these findings can be generalized.

9. Conclusion

This study examined the effects of digital storytelling (DST) on EFL student engagement, including motivation, participation and language skills. The results suggest that DST has a significant impact on student's motivation, leading to moderate gains in intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, perceived enjoyment and self-efficacy. Students were enthusiastic about class activities, and there was a notable increase in the amount of participation. But there was variation in social interaction especially -- varying according to participant's tech-savviness and communication styles. DST also evoked the growth of language skills, in speaking, listening, reading and writing. Reading was the most improved skill and speaking/writing improved to a moderate degree. There were overall good to moderate satisfaction and confidence on aspects of DST, though confidence varied significantly between students indicating the need for individualized support. The findings support the potential of DST in boosting students' motivation, willingness to participate, and language acquisition. In creating a more interactive, stimulating and individualized learning atmosphere, DST makes an effective contribution to improving English language proficiency and learner engagement that might be useful for educational practice and research in the future.

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