



The effect of using digital stories on vocabulary acquisition among Arab ESL students who live in Israel

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Abstract

The current study seeks to examine the effect of digital storytelling (DST) on vocabulary acquisition of Arab ESL students who live in Israel. The study was conducted among 10 Arab teachers from Arab elementary and junior high schools in Northern Israel. This study is based on a semi-closed interview. Interviews are conducted with the teachers in their schools, places teachers choose, or simply using the ZOOM application. The interview consists of 8 questions that deal with using digital stories in English classes. The data are qualitatively analyzed; the thematic approach is used as an inductive way of data analysis. The results show that: First, digital storytelling allows students to become creative storytellers by choosing a topic. Second, using digital stories improves the vocabulary acquisition of the learners. Third, digital stories can be used as instructional materials, and they can increase the level of knowledge and interest in the subject taught. Finally, digital stories could change the students' attitudes toward studying English.

Keywords: digital storytelling, ESL, vocabulary acquisition

Introduction

Enhancing English vocabulary in Arab schools is the main problem often faced by English teachers. L2 (second language) acquisition is the process in which the learners will acquire their second languages: "It requires interaction and meaningful communication between speaker and listener in the target language. It is intended that the message could be understood" (Tridinanti, 2017) [27].

English is considered the fourth language in Arab schools. Arab students use their standardized Arabic, both oral and written expressions in class, but they use colloquial Arabic (*'Ammiya*) only for oral expression at home (Oueini, Awada & Kaissi, 2020) [18]. Moreover, Hebrew is their third language which means that English is their fourth. This tough reality urges the teachers to look for methods and techniques to enrich and enhance students' vocabulary items since the number of vocabulary items that the speaker's measures language competence acquire in both the respective and productive levels. One of these methods is using the digital stories that have become common in nowadays-English sites.

This study will examine the effect of using digital stories on vocabulary acquisition among ten Arab ESL teachers, from both elementary and junior high schools who agree to participate for answering the following research question: How does using digital stories affect Arab ESL students' vocabulary acquisition?

Review of Related Literature

Digital Storytelling

There are a number of definitions for "Digital Storytelling," but in general, they all rotate around the notion of linking the art of telling stories with a diversity of digital multimedia, such as images, audio, and video. It is a fact

that all digital stories bring together some mix of digital graphics, text, recorded audio story, video, and music to show information on a definite topic. As is the case with traditional storytelling, digital stories spin around a selected theme and frequently contain a certain perspective. The stories are typically only a few minutes long and have a diversity of uses, including the telling of personal stories, the narrating of historical events, or the telling or teaching of a specific topic (Robin, 2011) [19].

Digital storytelling (DST) differs from conventional storytelling in that it guarantees the interaction of the individuals with the stories and allows them to form their own stories not only by keeping them in the position of listeners, on the one hand; but rather by using the information and communication technology as a way of telling stories. In literature, definitions of DST focus on combining the art of storytelling with several multimedia such as text, image, audio, music, and video purposes. DST is commonly used in different disciplines such as education, health, communication, tourism, and sociology (Çıralı & Usluel, 2015) [6]. Moreover, according to Digital Storytelling Association (2011) [8], digital storytelling is the modern variety of the traditional method of storytelling, using digital media to create texts to tell stories. Digital storytelling is a method of telling stories innovatively by incorporating pictures, texts, sounds, and movies to tell and share users' stories in a digital format. As compared to traditional storytelling, digital storytelling has changed radically with the combination of technology.

There are a number of issues that need to be discussed under digital stories, the frequency of using them, the issue of giving tasks following any digital story, the change in students' attitudes, and the difficulties of using them. Storytelling has been one of the most frequently used

methods in many ways in education at almost all levels (Tridinanti, 2017) ^[27]. It has emerged as a powerful teaching and learning tool that engages both teachers and students. Digital storytelling allows students to become creative storytellers by selecting a topic, conducting research, writing a script, and developing a story. Students then combine this story with multimedia applications and share it with peers and the wider community (Robin & McNeil, 2012) ^[20]. When students are given the task of creating digital stories, either individually or as members of a group, the work provides students with a strong foundation in what has been called 21st -century skills (Niemi & Multisilta, 2015) ^[16]. These skills include digital literacy, global literacy, technology literacy, visual literacy, and information literacy.

Concerning the issue of change that may occur in the aftermath of using digital stories. Balaman's study (2016) ^[3] examines the effect of digital storytelling instruction on the attitudes of students toward teaching technologies. The study has 20 students. It is predicted that digital storytelling has a positive effect on students' attitudes toward education technologies.

Vocabulary

Vocabulary is a central component of English language teaching and learning. This is because it reflects how students will read, write, listen and speak. Without enough vocabulary, students cannot communicate with each other and express their feelings and ideas. So, no matter how well the students learn grammar, and no matter how successfully the sounds of L2 are mastered, without words to express a wide range of meanings, communication in an L2 cannot happen in any meaningful way (Stockwell & Liu, 2015) ^[24]. Vocabulary knowledge is essential for fluent second language (L2) use. Learners need a large amount of vocabulary to communicate successfully in an L2. Studies show that; to reach successful comprehension of a wide range of written and spoken discourse, learners need to know around 6,000 to 7,000 and 8,000 to 9,000-word families, respectively (Nation, 2006) ^[15].

The effect of using digital stories on vocabulary acquisition among ESL students

Storytelling has been digitalized and used as a learning material in encouraging language learning as it can stimulate students to be involved in learning, whereas the integration of technology into the making of stories increases the interactivity of stories that can appeal to learners' awareness. Besides, digital storytelling is a valuable device in language learning as it develops learners' language skills such as reading, writing, listening, speaking, grammar, and vocabulary (Digital Storytelling Association, 2011) ^[8].

The use of digital storytelling permits implied instruction of vocabulary to be completed in a stimulating and attractive way.

Smeda, Dakich & Sharda (2014) ^[23] indicated that digital storytelling is an active device that can help students learn the material and obtain vocabulary. Using digital storytelling as a learning material in class can fascinate the learners who used to be called "Digital Natives" to learn vocabulary. The use of digital storytelling can engage learners in learning as it provides them with the motivation

to learn "because of the up-to-date ICT technologies and multimedia functions, which can appeal to young generations" (Tecnam, 2013: 27) ^[25]. At the present time, learners are exposed to the use of technological devices such as smartphones, tablets, and laptops most of the time; hereafter, the use of technology in learning positions slightly or intensively represents no difficulty at all to the learners as technology is by now a part of their lives (Smeda, Dakich & Sharda, 2014) ^[23].

According to Tecnam (2013) ^[25], digital storytelling is very valuable in the teaching and learning of vocabulary as realistic and theoretical information is quickly learned, longer recalled, more eagerly remembered, and more precisely applied. This is so because when that information is distributed as a well-told story, digital storytelling can represent language methods in the most normal way. With the addition of multimedia, learning is a lot more suitable and easier for learners. This echoes what Abdul-Ameer (2014) ^[1] suggested, i.e. the use of digital storytelling produces an original and communicative learning atmosphere. Similarly, Traore & Kyei-Blankson (2011) ^[26] voiced a similar idea, i.e. digital storytelling can stimulate student-centered learning such as student engagement, participation in detailed and in-depth learning, involvement in project-based learning, and integration of technology in learning. The dynamics of the multimedia fundamentals, the high interactivity of the digital storytelling, and the attractiveness of the visuals and audio rooted in the application add to the improved effectiveness of vocabulary acquisition.

Tridinanti (2017) ^[27] states that digital storytelling plays a significant role in students' learning vocabulary turning the learning process more appropriate for the learners. Moreover, digital storytelling could stimulate creativity and provide students with an opportunity to speak because they can use their stories to share beliefs and emotions with others. A motivating digital story is characterized by presenting a considerable story, providing a communicative context, giving the image to increase the audience's passion, adding music and other sound effects to reinforce the notions, and engaging caring thinking from the audience. Accordingly, via digital storytelling, it is predictable that learners could act as an energetic part in helping themselves in their English vocabulary acquisition. Tridinanti adds that proper technology incorporation in class is an important precondition for the learning process to be actual. There is a nearby link between storytelling and learning because the process of making the story is also a process of meaning-making. Incorporating the circumstance for learners to tell a story will also strengthen students' learning.

Leong, Abidin & Saibon's (2019) ^[13] study, which examined the effects of digital storytelling in vocabulary learning among young Malaysian English as Second Language (ESL) learners, revealed that there were several impacts of digital storytelling on vocabulary learning and all these effects are positive. De Jong and Bus (2002) ^[7], who researched 24 children aged 4–6, found that those who had a higher level of letter knowledge and word recognition improved their word reading level following the activity with an e-book (6 times) more than the control group. Moreover, Broemmel, Moran, and Wooten's (2015) ^[5] study, which explored how exposure to animated books impacts young children's literacy development among 24

American students from four mixed-age classrooms, found that children's increased use of new related vocabulary after multiple exposures to the books, whether participants were in the control group or the experimental one.

Tridinanti's (2017) [27] study consisting of 30 Indonesian students of the B group (5-6 years old) showed that digital storytelling learning activities could enhance the children's English vocabulary acquisition. Therefore, digital storytelling can be considered as a new tool to improve English language learning in the classroom. More, Abdul-Ameer's (2014) [1] study, which was carried out at Al-Imams' Ali private primary school for girls in Al-Diwaniyah City (Iraq), has shown that digital storytelling could develop vocabulary learning in English as a foreign language. Moreover, Verhallen and Bus's (2010) [28] experiment examined the effects of video storybooks on the receptive and expressive vocabularies of 5-year-old children. The results reveal that children learned words receptively and expressively; however, the children seldom learned the same words both ways. Both treatments benefited receptive and expressive vocabularies; yet, readings with the addition of video were found to be especially effective for expressive L2 vocabulary acquisition.

In Israel, 42% of middle socioeconomic status (SES) mothers reported that their preschool children have e-book software at home (Or, 2009) [17]. Korat (2010) [10] examined the effect of reading an electronic storybook (e-book) on Israeli children's language and literacy in kindergarten children compared to first graders; he found that children who read the e-book exhibited significant progress in word meaning and word reading compared to the control group. Kindergarten children progressed in word reading more significantly than first-graders across treatment groups. These results might indicate that word reading improvement after reading e-books is possible for children who already have good orthographic knowledge and less for beginners. Shamir and Korat's (2015) [21] carried out a study that focused on using educational e-books specially designed by the authors to promote literacy among young children in the 5-6 age group. The review focuses on the e-book's contribution to vocabulary acquisition between two groups of kindergartners exhibiting difficulties in language development and emergent literacy. Overall, both groups of children were found to improve vocabulary following e-book activities in different contexts. These results affirm the e-book's efficacy as an educational tool in heterogeneous classrooms.

There is no enough research that has been conducted among Israeli students concerning the effect of using digital stories on vocabulary acquisition among ESL students, nor are there studies concerning Arab students, in specific. This is a reason why the topic of this study was chosen: The Effect of Using Digital Stories on Vocabulary Acquisition among ESL Students. The researchers of this article intend to examine the issue, especially in the Arab sector in Israel to answer the research question: Is there a significant effect of digital story telling on enhancing Arab EFL students' vocabulary acquisition? However, further research is needed to clarify the impact of using digital stories in Arab schools and among Arab learners.

Methodology

This section discusses the methodology used for this study. It is based on using the qualitative approach in order to answer the research question. It presents the research questions, the target population, the research approach and

the data collection method. Finally, it highlights the ethical considerations that had to be undertaken.

Research method

The research is based on the qualitative method. Qualitative research is concerned with collecting and analyzing information in many forms, chiefly non-numeric, as possible. It tends to focus on exploring, in as much detail as possible, smaller numbers of instances or examples, which are seen as being interesting or illuminating, and aim at achieving 'depth' rather than 'breadth'. 'Qualitative' methods are used to answer questions about experience, meaning and perspective, most often from the standpoint of the participants. These data are usually not amenable to counting or measuring. Qualitative research techniques include interviews to seek views on a focused topic or understand a condition, experience, or event from a personal perspective (Hammarberg, Kirkman & Lacey, 2016) [9].

Data collection methods

This study is based on a semi-closed interview. Interviews were conducted with the teachers in their schools or teachers could choose to simply use the ZOOM application. Semi-structured interviews were used in order to be flexible in terms of the order in which the topics are considered, and, perhaps more significantly, to let the interviewees develop ideas and speak more widely on the issues raised by the researcher. The interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed (Adams, 2015). The interview consisted of 8 questions that dealt with using digital stories in English classes.

Population

The target population consisted of 10 Arab teachers from Arab elementary and junior high schools in Northern Israel. They are between 30 and 57 years old and agreed to participate in the research. 7 of them have their M.A. degree while 3 hold a B.A. degree. All of the participants have been teaching from 7 to 35 years. The participants come from the three religions: Muslims (4: 2 elementary & 2 Junior-high), Christians (3: an elementary teacher & 2 Junior-high) and Druze (3: 2 elementary & one junior-high). All of them used digital stories in their English classes, as a prerequisite to participate in the study. Table 1 reports the background information of the teachers.

Table 1: Background information about the participants.

	Teacher's Name*	Age	Religion	Years of teaching	Highest level of education	Type of School
1	Danya	30	M**	17	M.Ed	E*****
2	Ranim	45	M	35	B.Ed.	E
3	Ansam	57	M	15	M.Ed	J*****
4	Suhair	50	M	20	M.Ed	J
5	Manal	34	C***	18	B.Ed.	E
6	Layla	47	C	10	M.Ed	J
7	Muna	43	C	7	M.Ed	J
8	Samia	38	D****	22	B.Ed.	E
9	Reem	50	D	29	M.Ed	E
10	Sondos	40	D	33	M.Ed	j

*: All names are pseudo names; **: M: Muslim; ***C: Christians; ****D: Druze; *****E: Elementary school; *****J: Junior-high school

Study design and procedure

In the first phase, the research question was formulated and, accordingly, the qualitative tools were tested for choosing the tool, which could be relevant and suitable for examining the research questions. In the second stage, the process of locating the research population was done using the snowball method technique whereby the research population were recruited in the form of a friend bringing a friend. Anyone who was interested in participating in the study and met the criteria of participation was asked to contact the researcher. The interviews were done according to the interviewees' convenience and the researcher explained the nature of the research and its objective.

Data analysis

The data were analyzed qualitatively; the thematic approach was used as an inductive way of data analysis. Thematic analysis was done through several phases. The researchers conducted the interviews, recorded and transcribed them. Then, theme development was made. They were followed by data reduction, simplification, defining and redefining. Themes and sub-themes are presented in the final stage. It is important that subthemes will be offered to demonstrate difference within and depth for each essential theme. Additionally, participant quotations will be written in italics, this is to distinguish them from the study findings.

Findings

The present study examines the effect of using digital stories on vocabulary acquisition among ESL students. The study came to answer the following research questions: How does using digital stories affect vocabulary acquisition among Arab ESL students? The findings section discusses the themes and sub-themes that the researchers deduced from the interviews. Below are the themes, sub-themes and examples from the findings. According to the findings of the interviews, five categories were defined:

1. digital stories and the frequency of using them,
2. digital stories and assigning tasks,
3. using digital stories to improve vocabulary,
4. changing students' attitudes and
5. difficulties when using digital stories.

Digital stories and the frequency of using them

Under the theme "Digital stories and the frequency of using them", the teachers gave the concept of "digital stories" almost the same definition whereas their opinions about the frequency of using them in class were different, as follows:

Digital stories

a "digital story" for most of the participant-teachers is a story computer-based. In other words, it is a story that needs a computer and other technical tools to make, tell and present it digitally. For example, Danya defines a digital story as "a multimedia demonstration joining a range of digital elements within a narrative structure (a story) which is *told, made and presented digitally*" (Ansam).

Frequency of using digital stories

concerning the use of digital stories, the teachers were divided into four groups that provided different answers.

1. Always used digital stories: 10% of the teachers said they *"always use digital stories"* (Danya).

2. Once a week: 40% of the teachers said that they used digital stories *"once a week"* (Ranim & Ansam).
3. Twice a week: 20% of the teachers said that they used digital stories *"twice a week"* (Suhair & Reem).
4. It depends: the rest of the teachers (30%) said they used digital stories when *"they feel they need them"* (Manal), *"I just wait for the students to ask for them"* (Samia), and *"when I feel like using them and they can benefit my lessons"* (Sondos).

Digital stories and assigning tasks

The sub-theme "Digital stories and tasks", talks about if teachers assign tasks when working on digital stories. The results of the interviews divided the teachers into three sub-categories:

1. those who always assigned tasks,
2. those who never assigned tasks and
3. those who related assigning tasks to the need of the lesson\teacher\etc.

I always assign tasks

60% of the teachers said that they assigned tasks for different reasons:

1. out of belief: *"I assign tasks ...because I believe in that"* (Ranim).
2. Work on the language: *"it is a good opportunity for the students to work on English through digital stories"* (Asam), and
3. focus on the story: *"I always give tasks...This way students focus more on the story"* (Layla).

I do not assign tasks

20% of the teachers said that they did not believe in assigning tasks for different reasons.

1. Digital stories were only for fun: For example, Danya said that *"I used digital stories just for fun and more exposure to English, not for assigning tasks"* and Mona said, *"I don't assign because I want the students just to enjoy the story and have a way to relax from homework"*.

Neither yes nor no

The results of the interviews show that 20% of the teachers relate assigning tasks to the aim of the story: For example, Manal says that it *"depends on the aim of the story. If it is for fun, then tasks are not part of the issue. Yet if to focus on language...I will assign tasks"* and *"depends on the purpose of the story. If it meant focusing on any language aspects, such as vocabulary, then I would give an assignment, otherwise there is no need"*, as Sondos claims.

Using digital stories to improve vocabulary

The theme "using digital stories to improve vocabulary" resulted in two sub-themes:

1. the frequency of using digital stories to focus on vocabulary and
2. the way teachers use digital stories to improve students' vocabulary acquisition or increase vocabulary items, as follows:

The frequency of using digital stories to focus on vocabulary

on the one hand, the findings showed that 60% of the participants used digital stories to focus on vocabulary. For example, Danya, Ansam, Suhair and Samia said "yes, because they *"are an excellent/good/beneficial/ authentic source for teaching vocabulary"* and Layla and Reem said, *"They always use them for focusing on vocabulary"*. On the other hand, the findings showed that 40% of the teachers "sometimes" (Ranim, Sondos & Muna) or "often" (Manal) used digital stories to focus on vocabulary.

Using digital stories to focus on/improve vocabulary acquisition

This sub-theme provided us with different ideas given by the teachers concerning using digital stories to improve vocabulary acquisition.

1. Learning or being exposed to new words: Danya, Reem and Suhair said, *"Digital stories draw young learners' attention to new words or words they know"* and Ranim added that this learning resulted from, *"the motivating experience of the digital story"* and Manal said because *"students are exposed to a communicative framework in which the items appear"*.
2. Using the words of the story in follow-up vocabulary activities: Ansam said, *"Using digital stories in the classroom is a very effective way to improve and develop learning vocabulary. E.g., using the story vocabulary to write a personal story"*.
3. Recalling vocabulary items: Layla said that digital stories helped students *"recall vocabulary items"*. Muna claimed, *"Since vocabulary is used in a proactive and original way, then memory for these words is strengthened"*.
4. Vocabulary learning strategies: Samia added, *"Digital stories give the students a deliberate study of vocabulary learning strategies"*.
5. Exposure to vocabulary through listening: Finally, Sondos said, *"digital stories give the students the chance to practice listening to vocabulary via a text that is not in their books"*.

Changing students' attitudes

The category "Changing students' attitudes" results in two sub-themes,

1. the teachers who say that their students' attitudes have changed and
2. those who do not relate the change of attitudes specifically to digital stories, as follows:

Students' attitudes changed

the results of the interview showed that 70% of the teachers claimed that digital stories could change the students' attitudes toward studying English. Danya, Ranim Manal, Layla, Muna, Reem and Sondos agreed that digital stories could change the students' attitudes toward studying English. Students

1. *"Have been exposed to the tool they love"* (Danya),
2. *"Students are more focused"* (Ranim),
3. *"I use the digital story in a very motivating way to make them change their attitudes"* (Manal),
4. students *"fed up with books"* (Layla),

5. *"Stories make the students get more engaged"* (Muna), and
6. *"It is their world"* (Reem).

The rest of the teachers (30%) claimed that students' attitudes have not changed after being exposed to digital stories. Ansam, for example, related to one change saying

1. the student's personality: *"not all the students"*. Suhair related the change in attitude to the
2. teacher method of teaching: *"it is the way the teacher presents the language not the digital stories themselves"*. Finally,
3. I just cannot decide: Samia seconds Suhair saying, *"I do not know because my students in general enjoy studying English with me"*.

Difficulties when using digital stories

Under the subject "Difficulties when using digital stories", the teachers talked about a number of difficulties.

1. Choosing the right story: Danya and Muna, for example, *"have difficulty choosing the right story to change the students' attitudes toward learning English"*.
2. Technical issues: Ranim said it was all about *"technical issues. i.e., the internet"*.
3. The students' themselves: Ansam claimed, *"Not all the students are interested in digital stories no matter the topic of the story"*.
4. Follow-up assignments and tasks: Suhair related the difficulty to *"preparing a task in the aftermath of watching the story"* and Layla added that she had difficulty in *"repeating the same follow-up exercise"*.
5. Effectiveness and time-consuming: Manal claimed that she was not sure she used digital stories *"to the end to benefit the students. Sometimes I feel I just burn the students' time"*.
6. Confusion: Samia feels *"confused when using digital stories"* whereas
7. using digital stories to focus on vocabulary was done by Reem, who claimed that she was not always sure she *"managed to use them for focusing on vocabulary"*. Finally, teachers' attitudes toward digital stories were also important; Sondos ended this theme saying, *"I do not like to use them a lot while my students love them"*.

The results of the interviews showed that the teacher's attitudes towards digital stories and their contribution to vocabulary acquisition depended on a number of factors: the students' attitudes, the teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of these stories and the content of the stories themselves.

Discussion

This study has one main goal: to examine the effect of using digital stories on vocabulary acquisition among Arab ESL students. This part discusses the main research findings and will be presented according to the themes presented in the findings section in order to answer the following research question: How does using digital stories affect vocabulary acquisition among Arab ESL students?

Digital stories and the frequency of using them

All the teachers agree that a "digital story" is computer-based. In other words, it is a story that needs a computer and other technical tools to make, tell and present it digitally. This finding is consistent with Robin (2011) ^[19], who defines a digital story as the art of telling stories with a diversity of digital multimedia, such as images, audio, and video. As for the frequency of using digital stories, the teachers give four different answers: always use digital stories, once a week, twice a week and it depends, which means that all of them use digital stories. This finding is consistent with Yilmaz, Koseoglu, Ayvali and Ozturk (2020) ^[29], who say that storytelling has been one of the most frequently used methods in many ways in education, from past to now at almost all levels.

Digital stories and assigning tasks

The results of the interviews divide the teachers into three sub-categories: those who always assign tasks, those who never assign tasks and the rest who relate assigning tasks to the need of the lesson/teacher/etc. For the teachers who always assign tasks, they report that they assign tasks out of belief, work on the language and focus on the story. These reasons lead the students towards creativity. Digital storytelling, as Robin and McNeil (2012) ^[20] claim, allows students to become creative storytellers through choosing a topic, conducting a study, writing a script, and developing the story. Students then combine this story with multimedia applications and share it with peers and the wider community (Robin & McNeil, 2012) ^[20]. When students are given the assignment of creating digital stories, either individually or as members of a group, the work provides students with a strong foundation in what have been called 21st century skills. These skills include digital literacy, global literacy, technology literacy, visual literacy, and information literacy (Niemi & Multisilta, 2015) ^[16].

Using digital stories to improve vocabulary

Using digital stories improves vocabulary results in two sub-themes: the frequency of using digital stories to focus on vocabulary and the way teachers use digital stories to improve students' vocabulary acquisition or increase vocabulary items. The frequency of using digital stories to focus on vocabulary shows that participant-teachers use digital stories to focus on vocabulary, whether always or sometimes. Using digital stories to focus on or improve vocabulary acquisition was translated by teachers into activities as learning or being exposed to new words, using the words of the story in follow-up vocabulary activities, recalling vocabulary items, vocabulary learning strategies, and exposure to vocabulary through listening. This finding is consistent with Tecnam (2013) ^[25], who states that digital storytelling is very valued in the teaching, learning and acquiring vocabulary as realistic and theoretical information is learnt quicker, recalled longer, remembered more eagerly and applied more precisely, when that information is distributed as a well-told story because digital storytelling can represent language methods in the most normal way.

Changing students' attitudes

The findings show that students did change their attitudes because of digital stories, however, still teachers claim that there are students who exhibit a change of attitudes, yet it is

not specifically related to digital stories. Still, the study shows that digital stories could change the students' attitudes toward studying English because students have been exposed to an interactive and attractive tool. Students become more focused and attended. The teachers, who claim that students' attitudes have not changed owing to digital stories, linked the change to the student's personality, teacher's method of teaching and other factors. This finding is inconsistent with the results of Balaman's (2016) ^[3] study. The study indicates that the digital storytelling method has a positive effect on students' attitudes toward education technologies. According to the interview results, it was also concluded that digital stories can be used as instructional materials, and it can increase the level of knowledge and interest in the subject using the education technologies.

Difficulties when using digital stories

The teachers talk about a number of difficulties arising when using digital stories such as choosing the right story, technical issues, the students' themselves, the follow-up assignments and tasks. Effectiveness and time-consuming, confusion, and being used to focus on vocabulary. This finding is consistent with Banzato's (2014) ^[4] study. It shows that although teachers have recognized the positive value of digital stories on the pedagogical and educational levels, the sample shows some resistance to using it at school, not so much due to the lack of technical competence, but for institutional reasons such as time constraints, access to technical equipment and curriculum demands. Yet, despite the challenges that Matamit, Roslan, Shahrill & Said's (2020) ^[14] study investigated in their study (the language aspect, development aspect, external challenges and existing knowledge), storytelling may enhance the students' language.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The researchers drew the following conclusions from the findings of the study and theoretical proposition of the literature:

1. The participants in the recent study agree that a "digital story" is computer-based. In other words, it is a story that needs a computer and other technical tools so as to make, tell and present digitally.
2. Digital storytelling allows students to become creative storytellers through choosing a topic, conducting a study, writing a script, and developing the story.
3. Using digital stories improves vocabulary acquisition in two sub-themes: the frequency of using digital stories to focus on vocabulary and the way teachers use digital stories to improve students' vocabulary acquisition or increase vocabulary items.
4. Digital stories can be used as instructional materials, and it can increase the level of knowledge and interest in the subject taught.
5. Digital stories could change the students' attitudes toward studying English because students have been exposed to an interactive and attractive tool.

Limitations and recommendations

As this is a small-scale study, its conclusions cannot be generalized to a larger population. However, as the aim of the study was to investigate the effect of using digital stories on vocabulary acquisition among Arab ESL students, others,

who wish to investigate teachers of a similar or different cultural make-up, can test the insights and the propositions that are made. It would be interesting to have more comparative studies among different groups of teachers and different sectors and schools in order to shed more light on the processes of learning and acquiring vocabulary using digital stories. Another limitation of this study is the assessment tool used, the interview, which gives personal information. In future research, it is recommended to combine more tools and the quantitative method, to support the qualitative findings, and to include tools, such as questionnaires, observation and surveys. This way, it will be possible to enrich the results of the research.

This study raises awareness among English teachers and course planners about the importance of using digital stories in the English lesson. It encourages teachers to make digital stories as practical part of their lessons and also examine their effectiveness and efficiency to learning and acquiring vocabulary in a way that suit their digital life. Teacher should know how to use digital stories cleverly and professionally.

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