Digital storytelling in EFL teaching in Kazakhstan

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to study the use of digital storytelling in teaching English as a foreign language in Kazakhstani educational institutions. To examine English teachers' experiences, practices, and attitudes towards using digital storytelling in the teaching process, we utilized semi-structured interviews. The study was conducted among in-service early career English teachers working in public and private secondary schools. The findings suggest that English teachers use digital storytelling in their teaching but not very frequently. Study participants also indicated that they would benefit from additional training and experience with using digital storytelling as a teaching technique in their work. According to the participants, the main barriers to using digital storytelling in the classroom are the lack of technology, teachers' methodological preparation, and time limitations. Despite these barriers, the teachers who participated in the study appreciate the substantial benefits of using digital storytelling in teaching English such as enhanced opportunities for developing students' speaking skills, creativity, and critical thinking.

Қазақстанда ағылшын тілін шет тілі ретінде оқытуда сандық әңгімелеу

Аңдатпа

Бұл жұмыстың мақсаты - қазақстандық білім беру ұйымдарында ағылшын тілін шет тілі ретінде оқытуда цифрлық әңгімелеуді қолданысын зерттеу. Ағылшын тілі мұғалімдерінің тәжірибесін және оқыту үдерісінде цифрлық әңгімелеуді қолдануға деген көзқарасын тексеру үшін біз жартылай құрылымды сұхбаттарды қолдандық. Зерттеу мемлекеттік және жекеменшік орта мектептерде жұмыс істейтін ағылшын тілі мұғалімдері арасында өтті. Зерттеу нәтижелеріне сәйкес ағылшын мұғалімдеріне цифрлық ертегілерді оқыту барысында қолданатындықтары анықталды, бірақ жиі емес. Зерттеуге қатысушылар сандық әңгімелеуді өз жұмысында оқыту әдісі ретінде қолдану бойынша қосымша тренингтер мен тәжірибе алмасу қажеттілігін де атап өтті. Қатысушылардың пікірі бойынша, сабақта цифрлық әңгімелеуді қолданудың негізгі кедергілері - бұл технологияның жетіспеуі, мұғалімдердің әдістемелік дайындығының әлсіздігі және уақыттың шектеулілігі. Осы кедергілерге қарамастан зерттеуге қатысқан мұғалімдер ағылшын тілін оқытуда сандық әңгімелеуді қолданудың айтарлықтай артықшылықтарын атап көрсетті. Атап айтқанда оқушылардың сөйлеу дағдыларын, шығармашылық қабілеттерін және сыни ойлауын дамытудың кеңейтілген мүмкіндіктері сияқты дағдылардың өсуіне айтарлықтай әсері барын көрсетті.

Цифровое рассказывание в обучении английского языка как иностранногов Казахстане

Аннотация

Целью данной статьи является изучение использования цифрового повествования при обучении английскому языку как иностранному в образовательных учреждениях Казахстана. Чтобы изучить опыт, практику и отношение учителей английского языка к использованию цифрового повествования в процессе обучения, мы использовали структурированные интервью. Исследование проводилось среди начинающих учителей английского языка, работающих в государственных и частных средних школах. Полученные данные свидетельствуют о том, что учителя английского языка используют цифровое повествование в своем обучении, но не очень часто. Участники исследования также указали, что им будет полезно дополнительное обучение и опыт использования цифрового повествования в качестве метода обучения в своей работе. По словам участников, основными препятствиями на пути использования цифрового повествования в классе являются отсутствие технологий, методическая подготовка учителей и нехватка времени. Несмотря на эти препятствия, учителя, принявшие участие в исследовании, ценят существенные преимущества использования цифрового повествования при обучении английскому языку, такие как расширенные возможности для развития у учащихся разговорных навыков, творческих способностей и критического мышления.

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Today's youth from birth are becoming familiar with various technologies, such as messaging, emails, blogs, social networking, portable music, web browsing (Prensky, 2001). As technology develops, educators use more and more advanced technology to support students (Nurshatayeva et al. 2020, 2021). Indeed, there are many applications and online resources that allow teachers to build their lessons are more effective (Hsu, 2013). To great surprise and luck, with the help of one tool, you can develop various skills in students, digital storytelling effectively affects positively not only in language teaching and learning, it also develops the personal qualities of students such as creativity, self-confidence, self-expression, research skills, technical skills, communication, critical-thinking, performance, responsibility, assessment skills and accepting criticism and correcting mistakes that contribute to the growth of learners in the 21st century. Teachers' interest in technology is also supported by the widely spread English-medium instruction implementation (Nurshatayeva, 2020, Nurshatayeva & Page, 2020).

Education in Kazakhstan is rapidly changing towards modern education. The main aim is to educate competitive youth who will be able to work in 21st century. Miller (2009) stated in his article "Digital storytelling" that digital storytelling is a valuable method in developing students' technology knowledge and skills which required in nowadays.

1.1 Defining 'digital storytelling'

According to the Digital Storytelling Association (USA) (1994) digital storytelling (DST) is a process of telling stories in modern way using digital devices to convey content deeper. Digital storytelling is a few minutes long a short story where, the narrator tells a short story

which was written by the narrator himself, which also includes his ideas, insights and emotions, using digital technologies that influence the audience (Norman 2011, Robin 2006, McLellan 2006). Bernard Robin (2016) in his article "The power of digital storytelling to support teaching and learning" gives brief definition to this term

> "[digital storytelling] combines the art of telling stories with a mixture of digital media, including text, pictures, recorded audio narration, music and video. These multimedia elements are blended together using computer software, to tell a story that usually revolves around a specific theme or topic and often contains a particular point of view".

1.2 Problem statement

Although digital storytelling is widely popular for last decades in the US and other developed and developing countries (Hartley& McWilliam 2009), it is an emerging technique among Kazakhstani EFL teachers. This study focuses on the use of Digital storytelling in EFL teaching in Kazakhstan and investigates it from the teachers' perspective based on their current knowledge and experience.

1.3 Research design

The purpose of the study was to learn and reflect on EFL teachers' experience in using digital storytelling in the teaching process. The research investigates the following questions:

1. How do EFL teachers use digital storytelling in teaching?

2. What are their attitudes towards' digital storytelling?

As research problem and questions focused on teachers' perceptions, qualitative data collection is the most appropriate one. Primary data was collected by conducting semi-structured interview. The interview script consisted of ten open-ended questions which were designed to

discuss in detail the teachers' understanding of digital storytelling and their experience in using digital storytelling in teaching English as a foreign language.

The rest of this dissertation is structured as follows. Chapter 2 presents the literature review considering the role and importance of digital storytelling in education, as well as components of creation and types of digital storytelling, and its use in teaching English as a foreign language. It will also present the benefits and difficulties of using digital storytelling in EFL teaching. Chapter 3 presents the methodology, where the research design described more detailed including the selection of participants, the data collection process and the process of data analysis. Chapter 4 presents the results of the study mainly discussing the findings. Finally, in Chapter 5 the presents the research summary and concludes this report.

The findings suggest that English teachers use digital storytelling in their teaching but not very frequently. Study participants also indicated that would benefit from additional training and experience with using digital storytelling as a teaching technique in their work. According to the participants, the main barriers to using digital storytelling in the classroom are the lack of technology, teachers' methodological preparation, and time limitations. Despite these barriers, the teachers who participated in the study appreciate the substantial benefits of using digital storytelling in teaching English such as enhanced opportunities for developing students' speaking skills, creativity, and critical thinking.

CHAPTER 2

Literature review

"The illiterate of 21st century will not be those who cannot read and write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn, and relearn".
-Alvin Toffler

2.1 Role and importance of digital storytelling in education

In the age of technology development, digital literacy is required as it provides incredible opportunities and alternatives in education in teaching and learning process. People are getting used to using different technologies in their daily lives, and this has become an integral part of human life. American Library Association (ALA) defines digital literacy as the ability of using digital technology to search, evaluate, produce and share information which requires cognitive and technical skills. Also, this definition might be supported by some other studies which stated that digital literacy is a skill correctly identifying the significance of material found on the Internet, analyzing it, checking if they are truthful and using it, as well as the ability to work on various wide platforms (Jones & Flannigan 2006, Fieldhouse & Nicholas 2008).

Storytelling is a way of communication, which brings history, culture and traditions from old generation to young. Also it is the oldest and traditional method in education and language teaching. More recent years, it has become an effective way of EFL teaching (Fitzgibbon& Wilhelm 1998, Ellis & Brewster 2002, Bala 2015), because telling stories helps learners to interpret what they have listened and learnt by retelling. In addition, in language teaching storytelling promotes learners' language literacy skills such as speaking, listening and vocabulary (Bala 2015). Storytelling promotes easier and more natural learning using authentic language, which engages learners and reduces anxiety (Fitzgibbon& Wilhelm 1998). The similar statement was introduced by Warschauer (1997) about multimedia use in English learning, he

suggests that it will create a soothing and safe learning environment that stimulates and promotes student's self-esteem while reducing their anxiety. Also, as Yüzer and Kilinç (2015), Balaman (2016) claim that one of the effective tools in learning is stories, as it is easy to remember. In addition, Ellis and Brewster (2002) argue that listening to stories in the classroom creates various feelings in students like sadness, or anxiety, which develop their emotional skills as well as improve language skills.

The use of digital technology in education is far from new. As Passey et al. (2016) claims it has been using for over twenty five years in most developed countries. Using multimedia in the classroom is helpful for students to better understand and comprehend new and complex contexts (Hibbing & Erickson 2003). The environment that multimedia creates allows learners to experience authentic language allowing them communicate with native speakers (Fang 2010), and influences on their learning participation and self-dependence (Acha 2009). Fang (2010) believes that proper use of multimedia can engage students in language learning, which is also an effective way to improve teaching quality. Also, according to Fosnot (1996), students acquire knowledge only through experience and discovery. Moreover, learning can be promoted due to the possibility of presenting information through different sources, as well as Internet is useful for both students and teachers to work with updated information Fang (2010). According to Wang (2008), to increase students' interest and engagement in language learning, teachers must combine traditional teaching methods with modern technology. The use of multimedia in language teaching increases the interest of students in the language learning, helps them to maintain concentration and involvement in the learning process.

Because of technology integrating in teaching process, storytelling took a modern form as digital storytelling which is one of the effective tools in language teaching and learning (Robin,

2006; Gregori-Signes, 2008). According to Behmer et al (2006) digital storytelling is simply as a traditional storytelling which allows people to share or exchange their knowledge and experience by telling a story. Norman (2011) defined it [digital storytelling] as a traditional storytelling using new technologies. Through digital storytelling storyteller expresses his understanding on a particular topic whether it is related to the storyteller himself, or about certain context. Depending on types of stories, they can be told in first or third person (Norman 2011). Maniar (2017) in her work simply put the explanation to this term as the process of sharing personal stories using of digital expression together with digital media like photos, artwork, animations, sound and music. Hartley and McWilliams (2017) define digital storytelling as a traditional method that allows individuals expression themselves.

In 1994, digital storytelling was officially elaborated and expanded by founders of the (CDS) Center for Digital Storytelling Joe Lambert, Dana Atchley and Nina Mullen in Berkley, California (Lambert 2009, 2010; Hartley & McWilliams 2009; Center 11: History cited by Alrutz 2015). The original focus of digital storytelling was to empower everyone to share their stories with the world. The CDS helps people to learn how to create and present their storytelling.

2.2 Compositional elements and types of digital stories

According to the CDS was designed and spread seven elements of digital storytelling as a guide to create a digital story. They are: 1) point of view - form the what's author's perspective; 2) dramatic question - a question that engages people to read the story till the end with interest; 3) emotional content - weighty content which engages the reader into the story; 4) the gift of your voice - when storyteller tells a story in an adapted way to make it understandable for

readers; 5) the power of the soundtrack - music that plays to make the story more effective; 6) economy - the way of conveying the necessary idea without overloading readers with a lot of information; 7) pacing - the rhythm of storytelling (Center for Digital Storytelling, 2005 cited by Robin 2006).

Bernard Robin (2006) has categorized three types of digital storytelling into the following groups: *personal storytelling* - which is one of the main reasons for the development of digital storytelling, telling your own stories; *historical events* - stories that include specific events from the past to make them understandable to the audience; *stories* created to explain a specific concept or experience.

Norman (2011) in her study "Digital storytelling in second language learning: A qualitative study on students' reflections on potentials for learning" discussed two types of digital storytelling in language classroom: personal and stories which are related to historical content or literature. According to author when creating a personal stories students work on their writing and speaking skills, but also there is given a focus on their personal reflection to the story.

2.3 Digital storytelling in EFL teaching

2.3.1. Advantages of using digital storytelling in EFL for learners

Banaszewski (2005) argues that digital storytelling can contribute to the development of modern pedagogy - from teaching to exam to teaching how to learn. The benefit of digital storytelling in education has been studied for many years, by scholars around the world and concluded its importance. Digital storytelling is helpfull for students not only in developing language skills such as listening, reading, writing and speaking, but also digital literacy which is

required in 21ˢᵗ century. Frasel (2010) in her book describes the use of digital storytelling in teaching process as a tool that can be used to engage and motivate learners in learning, a group working or individual assignments, and allows learners to use modern technologies in learning purpose.

Sandaran and Kia (2013) studied the effectiveness of digital stories in improving listening comprehension Chinese schools students and concluded that digital storytelling is helpful in developing not only listening skills, but also to increase students motivation, engaging, and focus in learning English as a foreign language. Despite the positive attitudes towards digital stories the authors highlighted some aspects for effective use of digital stories for improving listening comprehension of students as providing key vocabulary beforehand. The similar study was conducted among foreign language students by Turkish scholar Tanrikulu (2020), where the scientist investigated the effect of digital storytelling on students' listening comprehension on listening lessons. According to him digital storytelling has a positive effect on students' listening skills and motivation, which also influences the creation of an effective learning environment. These findings can be supported by Tamjid and Hassanzadeh (2014) who conducted a study among pre-intermediate EFL learners in Iran to investigate the effect of digital storytelling in learners' listening and concluded its effectiveness, also highlighted learners' better comprehension of target language through the use of multiple digital devices together (image, sounds and texts).

Jakes and Brennan (2005) argue that digital storytelling can be viewed as high quality teaching because it focuses primarily on writing. The authors describe the benefits of digital storytelling as an effective process of developing students' visual literacy, digital literacy and the ability to use it, increasing the persuasiveness and competitiveness of students' voices,

encouraging creativity, writing, participation in learning, information literacy-learners who know how to use it correctly and avoid unfair use. Also, they claim that digital storytelling helps students create incredible stories that include their emotions and experiences and present it [stories] through technology (Jakes & Brennan 2005). Smeda, Dakich and Sharda (2014) suggest that digital storytelling creates more interesting and entertaining learning environment which causes to provide better educational outcomes for learners and provides deep and meaningful learning. In addition, the authors claim that digital storytelling allows students work on their problems as well as improve the required technical skills. According to Castaneda (2013) and Aziz (2020), digital storytelling allows students to create enhanced version of their stories, which motivates students to learn the language and develop literacy. Razmi et al (2014) argue that the process of creating digital storytelling develops students' literacy skills and oral performance. In their study among undergraduate Iranian EFL students, researchers concluded the effect of digital storytelling not only in improving students' language skills (speaking, writing, reading, listening) but also students' engaging in discussions and presenting their stories in perfect way so the audience can enjoy it. Many scholars believe that digital stories improve students' interest in reading and increase their vocabulary (Ta'amneh 2018, Hamdy 2017, Anggeraini & Afifah 2017, Baghdasaryan 2011). It also helpfull to develop and enhance students' writing skills by reading digital stories (Gakhar & Thompson 2007, Norman 2011, Xu et al 2011). Robin (2006) argues that by writing stories on their own learners become author of their paper and this makes them involved in the process of digital storytelling. Digital storytelling has a positive effect on developing student's listening skills (Tamjid & Hassanzadeh 2014, Tanrikulu 2020, Sandarana & Lim 2013) and academic performance (Aljaraideh 2019), also they became more focused and concentrated (Ramírez & Belmonte 2007, Loukia 2006, Abdollahpour & Maleki 2012,

Tatli&Aksoy 2017). Chauhan and Maniar (2017) argues that digital storytelling helps students to work on authentic tasks, which effects on improving their public speaking skills, performing knowledge to audience and getting feedback from them. Baghdasaryan (2011) and Eissa (2019) note that digital storytelling helps students practice their speaking skills, grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary, which affects their confidence in using the target language.

Digital storytelling is effective in EFL teaching for content understanding and representation. Robin (2005) argues that digital storytelling will enable learners to work with complex content and present their knowledge and ideas. According to Norman (2011) using digital storytelling is especially interesting in a foreign language teaching, because it motivates to practice language skills. This was supported by Tahriri (2015) who claims that using digital storytelling instruction motivates students in language learning and improves their oracy skills. In addition, Arroba and Acosta (2021) argue that authentic digital storytelling can be implemented as an alternative communication strategy to improve students' speaking skills. Digital storytelling helps to increase students' motivation to speak up, sharing their personal stories, and their opinions about certain situations, even about county situations (Abdelmageed & El-Naggar 2018, Norman 2011, Maha Fasi 2011, Afrilyasanti & Basthomi 2011, Gregori-Signs 2014). Kajder (2006) suggests that digital storytelling can be helpful while working with humble learners who just submit given tasks and remain silent for the rest of the lesson. He also claims that digital storytelling encourages students to work on their voice as they write and read, share their stories with their peers and receive feedback from them. Razmi et al (2014) supported this claiming that digital storytelling encourages even unwilling students to work flawlessly as well as work on their verbal skills. Moreover, Abdolmanafi-Rokni and Qarajeh (2014) argue that digital storytelling is accomplished technique for working with young learners who need

additional educational support. According to the authors using digital storytelling helps to improve not only communication skills (speaking, writing), but also increases learners' interest in language learning overall. In addition, Balaman (2016) suggests that using digital storytelling as a language teaching tool is helpful to enhance learners' interest and attention, which is also improves the learning level. The use of digital storytelling in language teaching contributes to the development of students' creative abilities, language skills such as writing, reading, speaking and listening, ability to construct the digital storytelling for an audience and creates a language environment for learning and teaching as a target language and culture (Zhusupova 2017). Through digital storytelling activities improves learner's digital literacy skills, they will learn basic skills and also develop multimedia competence (Robin 2006, Yuksel et al. 2011, Gregori-Signes 2014, Dakich 2008, Norman 2011, Banaszewski 2005, Barber 2016).

Digital storytelling has a great impact on students' critical thinking, digital literacy and academic achievement (Gakhar & Thompson 2007, Wu & Yang 2012, Gregori-Signes 2014, Barber 2016). Additionally, Robin (2008) argues that by creating their own digital stories, learners acquire a range of skills such as digital literacy, global literacy, technology literacy, visual literacy, and information literacy, which were developed by the Partnership for 21st Century Skills. This was later supported by scientists Garcia and Rossiter (2010), who added three more skills that students can develop after practicing digital storytelling: empathy and perspective, self-understanding, and community building. In addition, digital storytelling helps teachers improve their technical skills, including the use of electronic devices such as personal computers, digital cameras, and recording devices (Smeda et. al 2014). It also helps to develop students' creativity, decision-making skills (Behmer et al 2006, Ohler 2008, Jakes & Brennan 2008, Benmayor 2008, Norman 2011).

According to Özüdoğru and Çakır (2020) findings digital storytelling improves the communication and collaboration between learners and educator, also promotes engagement and entertaining in learning. Smeda et al (2014) argue that through the exchange of knowledge and experience, students developed collaboration skills with their peers and teachers, as well as increased teamwork skills. Moreover, non-native speaker students prefer to express themselves through visual means rather than more words that help boost their communication and self-confidence, also students get feedback from each other and work collaboratively (Smeda et al 2014). Moreover, it is helpful on developing peer and self-assessment of students (Norman 2011, Gregori-Signes 2014, Smeda et al 2014, Barber 2016, Maniar 2017, Özüdoğru, G. & Çakır, H. 2020).

2.3.2. Difficulties in using digital storytelling in EFL for learners

According to Hartley and McWilliams (2017) digital storytelling is widely used in teaching practice in North America, as it is actively taught to pre-service teachers in education departments. Despite of numerous advantages of digital storytelling in EFL teaching researchers highlight some disadvantages or difficulties using this tool in teaching process which were described below. Banaszewski (2005) argues that there is a gap between traditional storytelling and digital storytelling practices. The author claims that digital storytelling is geared more towards developing learners' digital skills than storytelling itself. Robin (2007) also claims that instead of focusing their attention on the content of story people often busy about its background set as music or pictures which attracts audience' attention. Kasami (2018) describes the disadvantages of implementing digital storytelling in language classroom as necessity of clear instructions on how to create digital storytelling, setting an assignment deadline with helpful hints, technical tips to solve problems, and educate information literate learners. According to

Maha Fasi (2011) literary property, inappropriate use of means and information overloading may be problematic while completing the story. In addition, digital storytelling cannot be effective if teachers are not sufficiently aware of the basic components of digital storytelling, which can lead to ineffective use of this method (Christiansen & Koelzer 2016). John Barbers (2016) states that even though digital storytelling provides flexible outcomes and student engagement during the lesson, there are difficulties that hinder effective digital storytelling as a lack of training, the necessary equipment, and support from teachers' side. A similar finding was suggested by Aziz (2020), who conducted a study among students of English as a foreign language in Indonesia, and in which he concluded that there were aspects that challenged students in storytelling, such as lack of technological skills and time constraints.

2.3.3 Steps of creating digital stories

According to Banaszewski (2005) creating digital storytelling involves developing students' social and cognitive skills. Moreover, producing DST is a process that reflects student achievement, learning strategies, self-discovery, cognitive knowledge, knowledge of their relationship with the world (Nguyen 2011). According to Jakes and Brennan (2005) the process of creating digital story is personal which is reasoning in learner' engagement and raise their productivity, that's why students should not cooperate in creating it. Aljaraideh (2019) argues that creating digital storytelling effects positively on students' active participation, motivation and engagement in target language learning, which also influences positively on students' academic achievement. Robin (2008), on the other hand, believes that Digital storytelling can be created by the learners individually or together with other learners. Robin (2016) in his article "The power of digital storytelling to support teaching and learning" introduced the process of

creating digital storytelling in detail, so educators may suggest for their learners follow these

steps. Twelve steps have been described in the table below as following:

Table 1. Steps of creating digital storytelling as described by Robin (2016)

Step 1: Choose a Topic	First, the goal should be set in accordance with what exactly you want to convey to the audience.
Step 2: Conduct Research on the Topic	Besides the Internet, you can also search the library for information.
Step 3: Write the First Draft of the Script	Since this is not a spontaneous speech, but a prepared speech for recording, before dubbing it, you must carefully check the content and meaning of the text
Script Writing Tip 1: Keep Your Script Small and Focused	When writing a digital story that lasts a few minutes, you need to pay attention to the specificity of the topic or problem.
Script Writing Tip 2: Make it Personal	Since you are going to tell the story yourself, based on your personal experience, knowledge and perception, then the audience will perceive the story as your own.
Script Writing Tip 3: Understand the Story Arc	The story consists of a preface, a main part and a conclusion. After describing the whole picture, further in the main part you analyze the problem in detail, and in the end you give the answers or the expected solutions to this problem.
Step 4: Receive Feedback on the Script	Share your draft script with peers and get feedback from them to make your story more readable and usable.
Step 5: Revise the Script	Just writing and rewriting, a few tries will help you get the result you want.
Step 6: Find, Create and Add Images	Besides the photos you have taken, you can also search for images, drawings, and more in Google Image Search.
Step 7: Respect Copyrights	There is a need to find tools that are publicly available or licensed under Creative Commons.
Step 8: Create a Storyboard	With a storyboard, you can easily plan and organize your story before it ends by adding new or modifying content.
Step 9: Record Audio Narration	For recording, you can use a voice recording application on your phone or a high-quality microphone
Step 10: Add Background Music (optional)	You can make your storytelling more effective by adding background music, which you can easily find on Jamendo.com, which also does not require payment.
Step 11: Build the Digital Story	Choose a software tool to create digital story
Step 12: Publish the Digital Story	Online platforms like YouTube, Google Drive, Microsoft OneDrive, Dropbox, etc. will help you share your digital story

Frazel (2011) in the book "Digital storytelling guide for educators" categorised the process of creating and presenting digital storytelling into three stages. The process starts with *preparation stage-* at this stage, students should think out the parts of their work so that may influence the final product. To do this, they can use a variety of tools and techniques to write their speech. In the following *production stage -* after collecting the necessary information and writing a script, students begin to design their product using various applications for creating videos, presentations, audio narration, and so on. In the final *presentation stage -* at this stage students must be sure in saving and gaining access to final product.

According to Christiansen and Koelzer (2016) students can use both computer based software (Windows Movie Maker) and simple available applications on their phones (phone camera, Microsoft Power Point, Voice Thread, Storybird) to create a digital story. Balaman (2016) suggest that digital storytelling can used in all stages of education as primary, secondary and high school students. According to the authors because of ease use of software packages as Windows Movie Maker or Flash stories can be prepared even by young learners. Fatma (2021) suggests that digital stories are flexible and adaptable tools that can meet most goals and can be used in almost all academic subjects. According to her writers can use several tools to create digital storytelling from the simplest, such as digital images and Photostory, to the more complex ones, such as Flash. Also, Kasami (2018) in his study allowed students to use headphones to record their voices clearly. The author suggests that all steps of creating digital storytelling should be clearly and accurately explained to students, especially technically challenging parts.

2.3.3 Teachers' role in creating digital storytelling

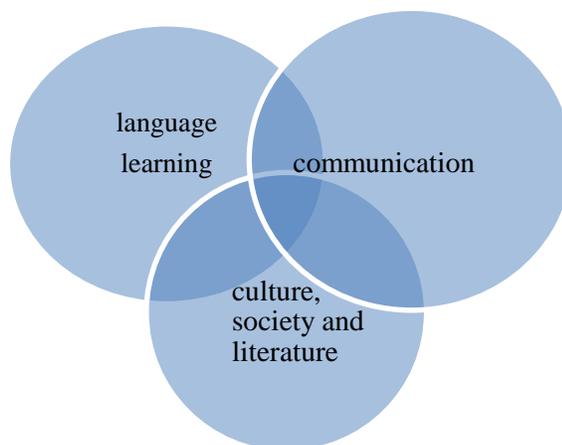Norman (2011) describes the basic skills and main areas which embracing digital storytelling as following:

Figure1. 'Digital storytelling in as a tool for learning' by Norman (2011), the figure was adopted from Norman (2011)

According to Norman (2011) English teachers should obtain all three required knowledge rather than have separate knowledge about technology, pedagogy and content. In addition, Norman (2011) argues that reflecting on one's own learning process has a positive effect on student learning.

Digital stories can be created by the teachers themselves. Teachers can use it as an introduction to a new section or as a short, but clear explanation of complex instructional content (Robin, 2006). Digital storytelling may also be helpful for teachers to discuss with students the learning process and the presented work (Robin 2006). The advantage of teacher-created digital storytelling is that learners can watch new content as many times as they wish. The similar finding about student-centered digital storytelling was concluded by Lowenthal (2009), who

suggests that digitally recording stories gives students the opportunity to tell their stories over and over again, so it allows them to share their stories worldwide. Also, according to Rosenthal (2010) teachers should at first create their digital stories, so they would know what students will experience during the process and be able to guide them based on their experience and knowledge. According to Lasica (2002) digital storytelling can be learned in a significantly short time. But Robin (2006) claims the opposite. He suggests that teachers should remember that digital storytelling can be time consuming for students as making multiple attempts to complete task. He also suggests that teachers should use peer review and reflection which is helpful to evaluate not only completed story of students, but also their learning process, which also provides opportunity to do this together with students.

Also, Frazel (2011) suggests that teachers should create a rubric which can help to guide and support students during the process. According to Ohler (2008) teachers do not need to be ideally digital literate to teach students how to manage their time, ability, and progress. Students only need support and direction. Creating a digital story requires students to digitally search for relevant sources and then create a story (Chung 2006, Banaszewski 2005). Also, Ohler (2008) argues that it is important to evaluate the entire process of creating a completed story. This could be supported by Frazel (2010) who focuses attention on writing process while creating digital stories as writing is content of story whether it is told or shown as text. Moreover, Midge claims that teachers should evaluate the prepared stories by criteria as writing, research, thinking and messaging. Similar statement was given by Norman (2011) as "students learn more during the whole digital storytelling process than what they express through the story itself". As many studies show digital storytelling is helpful for both teachers and students (Robin 2006, Dakich 2008).

2.5 Previous studies of the use of DST in EFL teaching

Most of studies are focused on effectiveness of digital storytelling in education and EFL teaching, also described the creation digital story. And most of them studied from learners' perspective. To my surprise there are some studies which focused on pre-service teachers' experience and they were shortly summarized below.

Zhusupova, R.F. from the Eurasian National University, Astana, in Kazakhstan, in her research focused on the use of digital storytelling in cultural teaching in English as a foreign language. In the article (Zhusupova, 2017), she presents a study among 1st year undergraduate students in the specialty "Foreign language: two foreign languages", in which the use of digital storytelling in language teaching contributes to the development of students' creative abilities, language skills such as writing, reading, speaking and listening, ability to construct the digital storytelling for an audience and creates a language environment for learning and teaching as a target language and culture.

Najat Smeda, Eva Dakich and Nalin Sharda (2014) scholars from Victoria University, the College of Engineering and Science. In the article authors investigated the effect of digital storytelling in increasing students' engagement and educational outcomes. The research findings indicate that with digital storytelling, students could work on their problems as well as improve the required technical skills. Also, through the exchange of knowledge and experience, students developed collaboration skills with their peers and teachers, as well as increased teamwork skills. Moreover, non-native students prefer to express themselves through visual means rather than more words that help boost their communication and self-confidence. In addition, digital storytelling has helped teachers improve their technical skills, including the use of electronic devices such as personal computers, digital cameras, and recording devices.

Aljaraideh (2019) in his study conducted among sixth grade public school learners in Jordan investigated the impact of digital storytelling on learners' academic achievement and motivation in learning English. According to the study results, the researcher came to conclusion that digital storytelling has significant impact on learners' interest and motivation in learning English, but also importance of implementing this tool in entire educational system of their school at all. Aljaraideh suggests that digital storytelling helps learners to understand and remember the information more easily, which effects on learners' active participation during the lesson and engage them in target language learning (Aljaraideh2019).

Tiba, C., Condy, J., Chigona, A. and Tunjera, N. (2015) in their article "Digital storytelling as a tool for teaching : perceptions of pre-service teachers" explored the benefits of digital storytelling in language teaching and learning, and the challenges teachers may face when working with DST. Based on the interview results the authors concluded that DST is useful for motivating and engaging students in the learning process, and for encouraging learners' self-expression and teamwork.

Liu Fang from the Wisconsin-Platteville University in his research claims that multimedia use in language teaching may be less effective with educators who just graduated and have little experience in using multimedia in language classroom. Moreover, they are not trained to use multimedia for teaching purpose (Lui Fang 2010). The author suggests that teachers should be trained how to use multimedia, adapt materials found on the Internet, and be prepared to solve problems that may arise during the lesson.

The above studies show that using digital storytelling as a teaching tool may be effective in increasing learners' interest in language learning and improving their social skills if it is used

correctly and if EFL teachers are trained and taught enough. What makes this study different from previous studies is that this study focuses on the use of DST in EFL teaching in Kazakhstan and investigates it from the teachers' perspective based on their current knowledge and experience.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology

The aim of this study was to analyze the usage of digital storytelling in EFL teaching from the perspective of Kazakhstani teachers. The study investigated the following research questions: 1. How do EFL teachers use digital storytelling in teaching? 2. What are the teachers' attitudes towards digital storytelling?

Following Miles, Huberman and Saldana (2018), we chose a qualitative research design to investigate the practices of EFL teachers' in using DST and to explore EFL teachers' attitudes towards DST as a teaching technique. Semi-structured interviews are the most appropriate tool for exploring teachers' current knowledge about digital storytelling, practices of using it and attitudes towards this educational tool, therefore we designed an interview protocol consisting of main questions aimed at exploring the target concepts and quote questions aimed at allowing participants to express themselves more fully.

Data collection

Participants of the study were selected among graduate master students. In-service teachers with one to four years of experience of EFL teaching in secondary school, overall 7 participants took part in the research study. Data was collected during February and March of 2021.

Considering the likelihood that the meaning of this phrase may be unfamiliar to participants, before starting interview the definition of the term 'digital storytelling' was given and short video example of digital storytelling was shown using a publicly available video https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U8LfG4b_R3Y.

Most of the communication with the participants took place via WhatsApp. For confidentiality, the names of the participants were replaced by identifiers such as Participant 1, Participant 2 or Participant 3, etc. The interviews were conducted via online calls and lasted about 30 minutes. Due to technical issues, some participants were not able to talk to me over the phone and preferred to type their responses and send the responses in written form. The interviews were conducted within four weeks.

Data analysis

The results of the interviews were analyzed manually using thematic analyses. Specifically, common words and phrases were identified and grouped in order to be able to determine trends in the respondents' answers.

Ethical aspects

All research ethics have been followed. Participants were informed with the aim and procedure of the study. Consent forms are attached in the Appendices. Additionally, all information collected during this dissertation was used for research purposes only and will remain confidential.

Limitations

The limitation of this study is that even though the participants were in different locations and were teaching during the study in different places the data collected cannot show the experiences of other EFL teachers in country. In other words, using a convenience sample of participants does not allow us to generalize the findings to all teachers of English in Kazakhstan. Yet the generalization was not the major goal in our research and using convenience samples is standard practice in qualitative research.

CHAPTER 4

Results

The study was focused on teachers' experiences in using digital storytelling in teaching English as a foreign language. Interview results show that only half of the participants use DST in practice. One of them teaches in private language school and rest of them including other participants who do not use DST teach in public schools. Moreover, those who use DST are not fully aware of the instructions for using DST. Despite of little experience and amount of participants the research analyzed following results related to the first research question.

How do EFL teachers use digital storytelling in teaching?

The results show that most of the participants think that DST is useful for discussing a specific topic, as using DST allows students to confidently express themselves and their points of view. As shown in the vignette below, from participant №2, this particular teacher shares his/her experience of using DST in her daily teaching,

> "During the lesson usually we use it while expressing our ideas and feeling toward the topic discussed. Students are free to express their thoughts".

Next, the interview data shows that most of the participant teachers use DST as homework assignment for students to write a personal narrative about themselves and loved ones. As shown in the vignette below, participant #1 shares her experience of using DST in teaching process:

> "I gave digital storytelling as homework for introducing their family members".

According to the study participants, they use DST both in individual assignments and group-work. When using DST as group projects, the participants noted that exchanging experience and knowledge increases the learners' active within-group communication as well as the active communication time between the learners and the teachers, as illustrated in the following vignette:

> "Creating digital storytelling can be made either individually or in pairs as well. It's good for making close relationship with students".

What are teachers' attitudes towards digital storytelling?

The interview results show that DST helps participant teachers to develop students' digital literacy. As shown in the vignette below, participant #1 thinks that when creating DST, students develop their research skills, as they search for information from different sources, analyze them to choose relevant information, and adapt to use

> "There is a lot of information in the Internet, creating digital storytelling is effective in developing in students' ability to select correct information and use them appropriately".

Next, the interview data suggest that using DST in EFL classroom can be effective for shy or passive students who are not overly comfortable to speak in front of an audience. As shown in the vignette below, participant #3 uses DST to encourage students to perform better and present their stories in the best way possible. That in turn seems to affect positively the students' academic achievement according to the interview data.

> "It is good method for introverts as there is no need to presenting something toward the whole class".

Further, our data shows that the participant teachers believe that DST allows their students to improve their speaking skills and help their English language learning overall. DST was reported to be useful for helping students learn how to participate in discussions. According to the collected data, teachers think that the use of DST helps their students become more skillful in sharing their understanding and opinions in debates and discussions via additional practice in creating stories on a particular topic. Here is how one of the study participants describes her experiences that highlight the contribution of DST to developing students' speaking skills:

> "Digital storytelling is good for speaking and for understanding. Also I think it helps to feel comfortable to use the target language. …it [DST] will help them [learners] to train their speaking skills".

As the results show, most of the participants think that DST is helpful to develop students' creativity. As creating digital stories generally requires a creative approach where students plan the plot of their story in advance, create a story, and think about how to present it to the audience. Furthermore, DST helps students learn how to think critically about their own work, so students try to make it better. As shown in the vignette below, participant #1 uses DST to allow students to introduce their stories in a way as they prefer,

> "Student-centered digital storytelling improves learner's creative and critical thinking skills".

The interview data shows, that most of the participant teachers find DST aids in e-learning to grab students' attention and keep them focused on the lessons, which helps to increase student interest in learning English. As shown in vignette below, participant #1 uses DST during e-learning and has positive attitude towards to it,

> "Because of e-learning, I started to use it more, students feel more engaged and interested in language learning".

This finding is in line with the earlier research done by M. Rahimi, S. Yadollahi and Sh. Wang (2016-7) who showed that digital storytelling, through an online platform, improves learners' language literacy such as reading and writing, and engaging so that students spent their time meaningfully for educational purposes.

The data suggest that most of the participants think that digital storytelling improves students' technical skills. Creating digital storytelling, students work with variety of programs to record their voices, take pictures, shoot videos, and put it all into a short video. According to participants, they believe that by creating digital storytelling, students can master necessary technical skills, but also digital storytelling facilitates students in English learning. As shown in vignette below, participant #3 uses DST to enable students to learn target language across multiple platforms,

> "One of the main advantages of digital storytelling is that it will improve students' ICT skills, which increases their interest in language learning".

Furthermore, the data suggests that most of the participants think that the lack of technology may be an issue which may hinder the effective use of digital storytelling in classroom. According to study participants, they suggest that would benefit from additional training and instructions on the use of digital storytelling. As shown in vignette below, participant #4describes problems which may prevent the effective use of digital storytelling in classroom by learners,

> "Some students don't have digital equipment. The absence of necessary tools or knowledge about how to create digital audio and videos are the obstacles to use this method".

Interview data suggests that most of the participants think that creating digital storytelling is time consuming and much harder to use it with low level language proficiency of students. As

shown in the vignette below, participant #2, this particular teacher shares her experience in using digital storytelling in language classroom,

> "Using it with lower level students is more difficult and it takes time to work with it. It is time consuming, and that is why you might not manage the class in the way you expect".

The results of the study indicate that participant teachers use digital storytelling in their classes, but not very frequently. As shown in vignette below, participant #3 shares her experience of using DST in language teaching,

> "I used this method once just to ask students to tell their opinion about the school."

Next, the interview data indicate the reason why some of the participants do not use digital storytelling in practice. According to the study participants, they think that using digital storytelling is less effective for young learners rather than for elder learners, as creating a digital storytelling takes more effort which can overwhelm children. As shown in the vignette below, from participant#6, this particular teacher shares her opinion about using DST,

> "I do not use digital storytelling because my children are still too small to create this kind of videos by themselves. I prefer to give them writing their stories then read them in front of the class, that's how I kind of changing the format of using this method."

The interview data suggest that most of the participants think that digital storytelling in EFL teaching worth to be considered as it has positive effect on learners' interest in language learning. As shown in the vignette below, from participant #3, this particular teacher shares her attitudes towards digital storytelling in the teaching process.

> "I'm not an experienced user of this method however I think that it is worth to be considered".

Table 2. Summary of interview data

Research questions	Participant teachers' responses
RQ1. How do EFL teachers use digital storytelling in teaching?	■ For introducing or explaining a new topic ■ Discussing a specific topic or situation ■ Giving as an assignment for writing students' personal narrative
RQ2. What are teachers' attitudes towards digital storytelling?	Positive attitudes ■ encouraging conversation, especially passive students ■ actively participating in discussions ■ developing creativity ■ critical thinking ■ teamwork and individual work ■ improving technical skills ■ research skills Negative attitudes ■ Lack of digital equipment and knowledge Necessity of training and practice ■ time consuming

CHAPTER 5

Conclusion

This research was aimed at examining EFL teachers' knowledge about digital storytelling, practices of using it in the teaching process and their attitudes towards this technique. The study also investigated how various factors in the classroom may make the use of digital storytelling more useful for language learning.

The findings suggest that English teachers use digital storytelling in their teaching but not very frequently. Study participants also indicated that they would benefit from additional training and experience with using digital storytelling as a teaching technique in their work. Furthermore, the findings indicate that English teachers use digital storytelling as a personal narrative in their teaching process, for example, to introduce family members and topics that are related to them personally. Moreover, as the results suggest, teachers use digital storytelling to introduce new content and topics for discussion.

These findings are aligned with Anita Norman (2011) who argues that using digital storytelling is more effective as a personal narrative related to learners' family members and about their friends or pets, and to stimulate students to reflect about themselves which helps beginner students overcome their struggles with writing. Moreover, Norman (2011) pointed out that academic stories presenting historical content and literature can be also used in foreign language learning.

According to the participants of the study, the main barriers to using digital storytelling in the classroom are the lack of technology, teachers' limited methodological preparation, and time limitations. These findings extend previous evidence that the main difficulties of teachers with DST were lack of digital literacy and lack of time (Özüdoğru and Çakır, 2020). This dissertation

shows that lack of technology should also be considered when implementing DST in teaching English.

Despite these barriers, the teachers who participated in the study appreciate the substantial benefits of using digital storytelling in teaching English such as enhanced opportunities for developing students' speaking skills, creativity, and critical thinking. Moreover, participant teachers indicated that the use of digital storytelling in individual assignments as well as in group work. In addition, the study participants indicated that because of switching to e-learning during the COVID-19 pandemic, they now use digital storytelling more often and highlighted its positive effect on students' interest and engagement in English learning.

To sum up, based on the findings we can conclude that there is a need to train teachers of English as a foreign language in the use of digital storytelling, taking into account the findings of this dissertation study with respect to the attitudes, practices, and challenges of using DST in actual teaching of English.

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