



The Use of Digital Storytelling to Improve Speaking Skills for Students at Ba Ria - Vung Tau College of Technology

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ABSTRACT: The article aims to investigate how digital storytelling can motivate students to learn English speaking with greater interest and active participation. It also explores the influence of digitised learning environments on traditional teaching practices, highlighting changes in the way of language teaching and learning. Quantitative data was collected through self-assessment surveys and structured questionnaires, and qualitative data was collected through semi-structured interviews. The selected students of 60 were then evenly assigned into two groups of the control group ($n = 30$) and the experimental group ($n = 30$). The findings from quantitative data indicate that students exposed to digital storytelling achieved significantly better speaking skills than those taught with traditional methods. Students also had greater motivation when learning speaking skills with digital storytelling. Besides, digital storytelling made teachers change their traditional teaching method. In addition, the findings from qualitative data revealed that both teachers and students have positive attitude with the use of digital storytelling. These results suggest that digital storytelling can play a vital role in enhancing speaking proficiency by integrating technology into English language teaching and learning.

KEYWORDS: Digitised learning environment, Digital storytelling, Integrating technology, Speaking skills.

1. INTRODUCTION

In the era of globalisation, English has become widely adopted as a second or foreign language in many countries. Vietnam is no exception, as English is considered a vital foreign language and is taught extensively across educational institutions. From an early age, Vietnamese children are enrolled in schools or language centres to study English. At the university level, students continue to develop their English skills, which are increasingly in demand by employers across a wide range of industries. The ability to speak English fluently is often seen as a key requirement for career advancement in both domestic and international contexts.

The teaching and learning of English speaking skills face numerous obstacles, including large class sizes, limited exposure to authentic language use, low learner confidence, and a continued reliance on teacher-centred instruction. These difficulties are also evident among English teachers at Ba Ria - Vung Tau College of Technology, where the majority of students come from rural areas and possess relatively low levels of English proficiency. In speaking lessons here, teachers often feel compelled to explain every aspect of the content and activities in detail, fearing that students may struggle to comprehend the lessons. As a result, a teacher-centred approach frequently dominates classroom instruction.

Since the rapid expansion of technology, its influence has increasingly shaped students' lives both inside and outside the classroom (Ramani and Alavi, 2017). Therefore, technology continues to play a crucial role in education. In response to these challenges mentioned above, recent innovations in educational technology have introduced new possibilities for language learning and teaching. One such innovation is digital storytelling, which uses multimedia elements such as images, voiceovers, video clips, and music to create personal, meaningful narratives.

Digital storytelling has emerged as an effective pedagogical tool that not only fosters creativity and student engagement but also enhances oral communication skills in a contextually rich and learner-centred environment. Studies indicate that digital storytelling can significantly improve learners' speaking fluency, pronunciation, and confidence. Moreover, it supports the development of digital literacy, which is an increasingly essential skill in the 21st century workplace and classroom.



As a result, the study investigates the use of digital storytelling as a tool to enhance English speaking skills among students at Ba Ria - Vung Tau College of Technology. It explores the didactic opportunities, pedagogical effectiveness, and potential challenges of implementing digital storytelling in a technical college context, from the perspectives of both teachers and learners.

Specifically, it focuses on the following objectives: (i) to explore the difficulties that students face when learning English speaking skills as a foreign language; (ii) to examine the effectiveness of integrating digital storytelling into English-speaking lessons; (iii) to investigate the perceptions and attitudes of both teachers and students towards the use of digital storytelling in language learning and (iv) to provide pedagogical implications and recommendations for future research and classroom practices related to the use of technology in speaking instruction.

In order to achieve these above objectives, the study addresses the following research questions:

1. How does digital storytelling help improve speaking skills for students at Ba Ria - Vung Tau College of Technology?
2. What are the attitudes of teachers and students towards the use of digital storytelling in English speaking lessons?

2. THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. Digital storytelling

Storytelling is widely recognised as one of the oldest and most fundamental forms of human literacy. Throughout history, stories have served as vehicles for cultural transmission, offering insights into social values, belief systems, and norms of behaviour (Stein, 1982). The analysis of both content and structure of stories can significantly enrich our understanding of diverse cultures and help illuminate cross-cultural differences, particularly regarding social ethics and interpersonal interactions. For instance, children and adults recreate their previous experiences through a story. In this situation, they impose a more elaborate structure on their personal knowledge. As a result, the teller can now integrate disconnected segments of information into a more cohesive representation (Stein, 1982).

Digital storytelling refers to the practice of using digital tools and multimedia elements such as images, audio, video, animation, and text to tell a story. It combines traditional storytelling techniques with modern technology to create engaging, often personal narratives. Digital storytelling is widely used in education, marketing, journalism, and entertainment to communicate ideas in a compelling and accessible format.

In education, digital storytelling is often used as a pedagogical tool that allows learners to express their thoughts creatively, develop their language skills, and engage in deeper critical thinking. It is especially effective in language learning, where students use digital narratives to improve their speaking, writing, and listening abilities.

2.2. Characteristics of digital storytelling

Digital storytelling is increasingly viewed as an innovative multimedia teaching technique that combines multiple semiotic resources, such as written text, images, emojis, and audio, to construct meaningful narratives. This method enables learners to create and publish stories online while conveying personal perspectives and emotional aspects through multimodal expression. The process promotes collaborative problem-solving, which contributes to the development of language proficiency (Nishioka, 2016), and the collaborative environment also supports improvements in students' digital literacy skills (Kapaniaris & Konstantopoulou, 2020).

Digital storytelling has several distinctive characteristics that set it apart from traditional storytelling. These include:

Integration of multimedia elements: It combines text, images, audio, video, music, and animation to create a rich, multisensory experience.

Narrative structure: A strong story structure with a clear beginning, middle, and end helps convey a meaningful message or personal experience.

Personal voice: The storyteller often uses their voice for narration, adding authenticity and emotional depth to the story.

Concise impact: Digital stories are usually brief, requiring clarity and focus on content and message.

Emotional appeal: Digital stories aim to connect with the audience on an emotional level, often reflecting personal, social, or cultural themes.

Creativity and Engagement: Digital stories encourage creative expression and engagement using visuals, sound, and storytelling techniques.



Purpose-driven communication: Each digital story is crafted with a clear purpose or message intended to inform, persuade, entertain, or inspire.

Audience awareness: Creators consider the audience's interests, background, and expectations to make the story more relevant and effective.

2.3. Use of digital storytelling in language teaching and learning

Digital storytelling represents a pedagogical innovation that integrates multiple modes of communication, text, images, audio, and video centred around a specific theme (Alismail, 2015). Through this format, students engage in a meaning-making process by combining various semiotic resources, enabling them to convey their messages more effectively and creatively (Buendgens-Kosten, 2021). As digital storytellers, learners are empowered to exercise a degree of subjectivity in deciding how to present information using diverse multimodal elements (Gregori-Signes, 2014). The construction and organisation of these multimodal texts are closely aligned with the storyteller's communicative intention, thereby fostering a deeper understanding of multimodal composition in hybrid formats (Yang, 2012).

Importantly, it allows students to express their emotions, perspectives, and social identities by integrating rich, varied media elements into their narratives. Compared to traditional storytelling, digital storytelling expands the expressive potential of narratives by enabling students to incorporate visual and auditory elements, creating more engaging, vivid, and persuasive stories (Balaman, 2018). Despite the introduction of new media formats, it still adheres to conventional compositional stages such as brainstorming, scripting, recording, editing, and publishing (Balaman, 2018). In this way, it revitalises the storytelling process without discarding its foundational structure.

Due to its versatility and potential to support multimodal literacy development, digital storytelling has been increasingly recognised as an essential component in teacher education programs (Gregori-Signes, 2014). For pre-service English teachers, in particular, it serves as a valuable pedagogical tool that cultivates their ability to integrate multimedia resources into teaching practices (Levy et al., 2015). The incorporation of multimedia technologies in story composition not only enhances students' technological competence but also strengthens their content knowledge and language proficiency (Eteokleous et al., 2015). Furthermore, creating multimodal texts demands the synthesis of linguistic skills, pedagogical knowledge, and digital literacy, offering substantial benefits for future language educators (Normann, 2021).

In English language teaching, digital storytelling is examined as a transformative approach to enhancing learners' communicative competence and digital skills. Fostering multimodal expression and learner agency aligns well with 21st century language teaching paradigms that emphasise creativity, collaboration, and technological integration in language classrooms. English language teaching and storytelling are explored not only as cultural and psychological constructs but also as essential pedagogical tools. Its potential to foster communicative competence, critical thinking, and personal expression makes it particularly relevant in language classrooms, where meaning-making and contextualised language use are key to language acquisition.

2.4. Effects of digital storytelling in language teaching and learning

Digital storytelling, which integrates traditional narrative techniques with modern multimedia tools such as images, videos, sound, and text, has emerged as a powerful pedagogical approach in language education. Its implementation in the classroom has demonstrated multifaceted benefits across linguistic, cognitive, affective, sociocultural, and technological dimensions.

From a linguistic perspective, it enhances learners' oral and written communication. The process of drafting, rehearsing, and presenting stories improves fluency, pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary. Students actively engage with the target language as they script and narrate personal or fictional stories, which significantly supports the development of speaking, writing, listening, and reading skills.

Cognitively, digital storytelling fosters critical thinking and creativity. Students are required to analyse, synthesise, and organise information to construct coherent narratives. This process not only cultivates their storytelling abilities but also strengthens higher-order thinking skills and multimodal literacy, as they combine verbal and visual elements to communicate meaning effectively.

Affective benefits are also notable because they help increase learners' motivation and engagement by providing opportunities for self-expression and personalisation. It reduces anxiety, particularly in speaking tasks, and helps build learner



confidence through the rehearsal and performance of digital narratives. Moreover, it encourages learner autonomy by allowing students to decide on content, structure, and the technological tools used in their stories.

From a sociocultural standpoint, digital storytelling fosters intercultural awareness and collaborative learning. Students often explore themes related to their cultural identity or social issues, promoting empathy and cross-cultural understanding. Group projects further enhance interpersonal communication and teamwork skills, creating a supportive learning environment. In addition, digital storytelling contributes to skill development. Learners gain practical experience with digital tools, thereby improving their technological literacy, a vital competency in today's digital world.

Digital storytelling is thereby an innovative and effective strategy for enhancing language learning. It supports not only linguistic development but also the cognitive, emotional, and social aspects of language acquisition. Its integration into English language teaching aligns well with the objectives of communicative language teaching and learner-centred approaches, particularly relevant to English language teaching, as it highlights how technology-enhanced pedagogical practices can significantly improve language proficiency and learner engagement in contemporary classrooms.

2.5. Speaking skills

English language teaching that examines diverse perspectives on speaking skills is essential to understanding how learners acquire and use spoken language in real-world contexts. Speaking is fundamentally an interactive process in which two or more participants achieve mutual understanding through verbal exchange. Oral communication requires not only the ability to produce clear and coherent speech but also the capacity for active and receptive listening. In this dynamic interaction, both the speaker and the listener play equally important roles. The speaker is responsible for encoding the intended message using appropriate linguistic forms, while the listener must decode and interpret the message in real time.

Burns (2006) further underscores that speaking skill is a core mode of human communication through which individuals convey their ideas, knowledge, and emotions. It is the primary medium through which speakers linguistically express themselves during spontaneous, real-time interactions. Unlike written communication, speaking unfolds moment by moment and demands immediate cognitive and linguistic responses from both participants.

For most language learners, speaking is perceived as the most essential and practical skill. Learners often assess their language proficiency based on how effectively they can express themselves orally. Despite its importance, speaking is frequently one of the most overlooked components in language instruction. In many classrooms, learners have limited opportunities to practice speaking, either during lessons or outside school. Furthermore, speaking skills are rarely assessed in formal examinations, which contributes to their marginalisation in curricula.

Therefore, speaking tasks designed should promote both linguistic development and cognitive engagement. Teachers are encouraged to provide opportunities for learners to express their viewpoints, analyse issues, and reflect critically on different topics. Such tasks not only enhance fluency and coherence but also support the development of independent thinking and communication confidence.

2.6. Speaking skill teaching and learning

Teaching speaking can be defined as guiding learners in producing English speech sounds and sound patterns accurately (Jeremy, 2007). It involves helping learners use stress, intonation, and rhythm appropriately, while expressing themselves fluently and independently. Moreover, teaching speaking also entails supporting learners in organising their thoughts in a logical and meaningful way, as well as choosing suitable language based on the social context, audience, or situation (Nunan, 2003).

In Vietnam, English language instruction has traditionally emphasised grammar over the development of the four core language skills of speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Despite studying English for many years, many students still struggle with correct pronunciation and lack the confidence to communicate effectively in English. Learners tend to overthink their speech and worry about making mistakes during communication. Additionally, large class sizes hinder teachers' ability to provide individual attention, and teaching often focuses on completing textbook content rather than fostering communicative competence.

The rigid curriculum, combined with limited class time, often prevents teachers from creating speaking-focused environments or providing adequate listening practice. The teacher-centred approach still dominates the classroom, with teachers preparing the entire lesson and students playing a passive role. This method has been ingrained in Vietnamese educational culture for a long time, making change difficult and time-consuming.



Furthermore, many Vietnamese English teachers feel unprepared and lack confidence in teaching pronunciation due to insufficient professional training. Local teachers often perceive their speaking ability to be inferior to that of native English speakers, even though students generally feel more comfortable speaking with non-native or local teachers.

Therefore, teaching speaking is inherently challenging, as becoming an effective speaker requires time, consistent practice, and perseverance. Speaking skills cannot be developed overnight. Effective speakers typically possess six key qualities such as confidence, authenticity, voice modulation, audience connection, appropriate body language, and the ability to learn from reviewing recordings of their speech.

In order to study speaking skills well, it is necessary for students to set specific, clear goals, as this will make it easier to focus and be proactive in the learning process. When they have clear goals, it will be easier to build a plan and be more motivated. Besides, choosing the right learning source for English speaking is important. Before starting to study, clearly define students' learning goals to focus on finding appropriate and practical documents. Evaluating the origin and reputation of the documents is also an important step to ensure accuracy and reliability.

2.7. Motivation and attitude

When learning a second language, attitudes toward learning English and examining learners' attitudes toward learning English are essential for understanding their language acquisition process. An additive bilingual is an individual who perceives learning a new language as an opportunity to enrich his or her knowledge and skills without diminishing his or her existing linguistic competence.

In earlier work, Lambert (2007) also distinguished between integrative and instrumental motivation in second language learning. Integrative motivation refers to a learner's desire to become part of the target language community and to interact meaningfully with its members. Learners driven by integrative motivation tend to invest greater effort in learning because they view the second language community with respect and admiration (Gardner & Smythe, 1982). This type of motivation is strongly linked to learners' positive attitudes toward both the learning context and the target language culture. On the other hand, instrumental motivation is associated with utilitarian goals such as gaining social recognition, improving employment prospects, or achieving academic and professional success (Lambert, 2007). Learners motivated instrumentally view language learning as a means to attain economic or pragmatic benefits. As Cook & Artino (2016) argue, both integrative and instrumental motivations are valuable and often coexist within the same learner, depending on personal goals and learning environments.

Furthermore, a learner's attitudes toward language learning are significantly influenced by the immediate learning context, including the course design, teaching method, classroom environment, and the broader sociocultural setting in which second language acquisition takes place (Gardner, 1985). Positive attitudes in such contexts can enhance learners' motivation, persistence, and ultimate achievement in the target language. Attitudes can be measured using both direct and indirect methods. Direct methods include self-report questionnaires, while indirect methods involve techniques such as the semantic differential technique, as used in the foundational study. These approaches provide valuable insights into learners' beliefs, feelings, and predispositions toward learning English speaking. According to Little (2002), all students possess the potential to enhance their learning within a supportive and evolving educational environment. While external factors can influence learning outcomes, sustained effort and engagement enable students to develop their knowledge effectively.

2.8. Conceptual framework

As illustrated in model below, the framework is designed by combining theories of task-based learning, digital literacy, and communicative competence, linking key components in a sequential and interactive process.

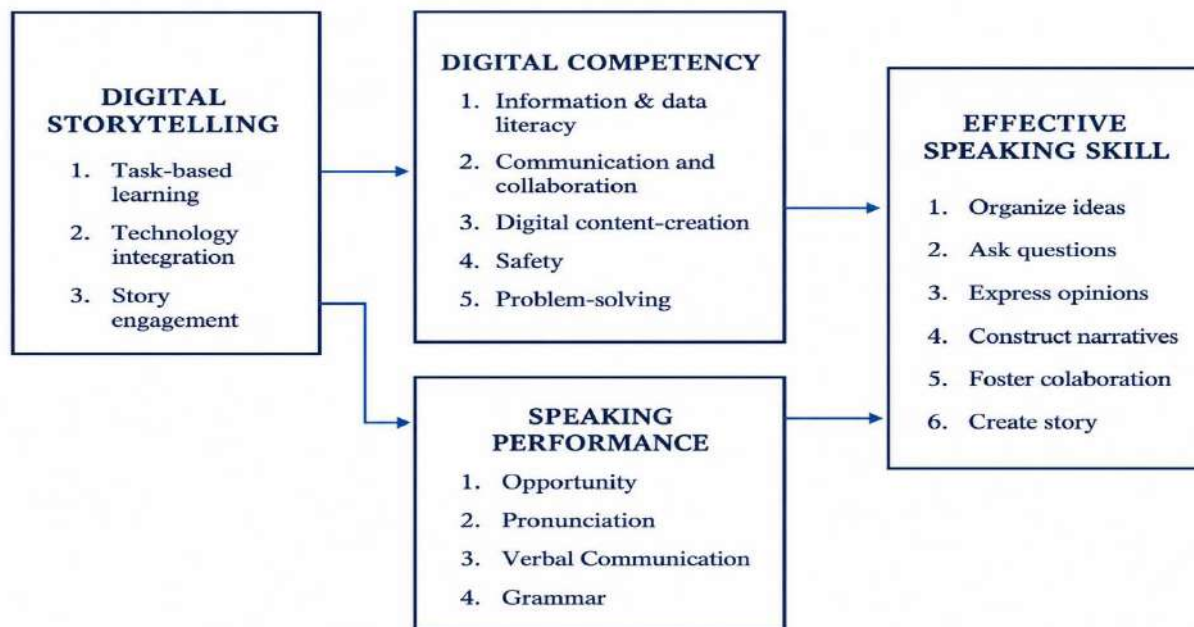


Figure 2.1. The framework of benefits of digital storytelling use to speaking skill improvement

Digital storytelling supports learner-centred instruction, allowing students to construct narratives using multimedia tools. According to Robin (2006), digital storytelling provides learners with meaningful opportunities to practice language skills in authentic, personalised contexts. Furthermore, task-based learning encourages purposeful communication and student autonomy (Willis & Willis, 2013), making digital storytelling an effective method for fostering oral fluency.

The use of digital storytelling contributes to the development of digital competency, defined as the ability to use digital tools for communication, collaboration, content creation, and problem-solving (Ferrari, 2013). Learners engage with multiple digital literacies, including information and data literacy, safety, and media production. These competencies play a critical role in modern language learning, as students are expected to navigate multimodal environments effectively. By developing digital competencies, students can participate more confidently in speaking tasks that require creativity and critical thinking.

2.9. Literature review

A typical study by Robin (2006) highlighted that digital storytelling provides learners with opportunities to construct meaning through personal narratives, thus enhancing both language use and communicative competence. Similarly, Smeda et al. (2014) emphasised that incorporating multimedia elements into speaking activities not only improves fluency but also reduces learners’ anxiety and boosts their confidence. In Asia, Hafner and Miller (2011) introduced digital video projects as a teaching strategy in Hong Kong universities. Their action research involved students creating English-language documentaries that combined storytelling with video production. The process promoted collaboration, critical thinking, and oral rehearsals, all of which contributed to enhanced speaking fluency. In addition, Yang and Wu (2012) in Taiwan investigated the effects of integrating Web 2.0 tools (blogs, YouTube, and podcasts) into English-speaking instruction. Their quasi-experimental study with university students revealed that students in the experimental group improved significantly in pronunciation, intonation, and vocabulary use. Learners also reported more positive attitudes toward speaking English in a tech-rich environment. Lastly, Kim (2018) highlighted the value of student-produced podcasts in improving speaking fluency. In a semester-long study in South Korea, students created weekly audio reflections on personal experiences and current events. Results showed marked improvement in fluency, vocabulary range, and speech coherence. More importantly, students felt ownership over their learning, which aligns with the principles of learner-centred instruction.

About the relationship among self-study, motivation and learning attitude, Levy et al. (2015) examined the linkages among three essential constructs such as sense of responsibility, engagement in learning activities, and perceived ability and motivation.



Their research, which surveyed 150 first-year non-English-major students at a private university in Central Taiwan, revealed that students acknowledged their responsibility for learning. The study emphasised the importance of encouraging students through more task-based activities to foster proactive learning attitudes. This finding is relevant to the current research as it highlights the role of learner responsibility and engagement in promoting autonomy.

In the aspect of CALL resources, Smith and Craig (2013) evaluated a course designed to improve the English proficiency of undergraduate EFL students at Meisei University in Japan. The course incorporated three learning support tools such as a learner passport, an e-language learning portfolio, and a self-direction diary. The results demonstrated that these tools supported learners in assessing their competencies, managing their learning schedules, and reflecting on their progress. It is concluded that regular and critical self-reflection significantly enhanced learners' autonomous use of CALL resources. Their study provides critical insights into the technological scaffolding needed to develop learner autonomy in EFL contexts.

In the context of Vietnam, the benefits of storytelling were also affirmed among younger learners. Tran Thanh Du (2021) conducted a case study at language centres in Binh Duong Province to examine the impact of storytelling on young learners' speaking and listening abilities. Using a mixed-methods design involving questionnaires, classroom observations, and interviews, the research concluded that storytelling activities, especially when delivered in structured, interactive formats, enhanced students' communicative competence. The study provided detailed instructional models and practical techniques that teachers could adopt to improve oral language skills in primary and lower-secondary classrooms.

A notable study by Nguyen Thi Thuy Hue (2023) at the Academy of Journalism and Communication investigated how digital storytelling could improve undergraduate students' speaking ability in an online environment during the COVID-19 pandemic. Twenty-five English-majored freshmen were tasked with creating individual storytelling videos, which they uploaded to YouTube. The study employed surveys and semi-structured interviews to explore students' experiences and perceptions. The findings indicated that students found the project motivating and beneficial for their speaking development. Many reported increased confidence, better articulation, and improved digital skills. Although some participants faced technical difficulties, the overall response was positive, suggesting that digital storytelling can foster both linguistic and digital literacy in Vietnamese higher education.

In a complementary study, Du Thi Mai et. al., (2024) examined the effects of digital storytelling on first-year English majors using the Movie Adventure application. Students created English-dubbed animated stories aligned with their speaking lessons. Using a combination of pre- and post-tests, questionnaires, and interviews, the researchers found significant improvements in speaking proficiency, particularly in fluency and confidence. Students also reported increased motivation and active participation in classroom activities. Importantly, the study emphasised the collaborative and interactive nature of digital storytelling, as students engaged in peer discussions, shared feedback, and developed a stronger sense of ownership in their learning.

Teacher perspectives on digital storytelling have also been explored. In their study, Duong My Tham and Pham Thi Thanh Thuy (2023) investigated EFL teachers' perceptions of using digital storytelling to teach listening skills to young learners in Dong Nai Province. Through quantitative questionnaires and qualitative interviews with 30 teachers, the study found that educators appreciated digital storytelling's potential to enhance student engagement and listening comprehension. However, challenges were also identified, including limitations in students' vocabulary, difficulties in managing multimedia content, and concerns over the appropriateness of certain linguistic features in digital stories. Despite these constraints, the majority of teachers supported further use of digital storytelling, provided that appropriate training and resources were made available.

Further insights were offered by Phan Thi Anh Nga et. al., (2024), who focused on university students' perceptions of digital storytelling as a language learning tool. Their research involved 83 EFL students and used surveys, interviews, student-produced videos, and online feedback analysis. The results revealed that digital storytelling positively influenced learners' confidence, motivation, and interpersonal interaction. Students felt more engaged and expressive during storytelling tasks and acknowledged digital storytelling's potential in fostering collaborative learning. However, the study also highlighted the need for a clear pedagogical framework and better time management strategies to maximise digital storytelling's effectiveness.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research design

This research adopted a mixed-methods approach, integrating quantitative and qualitative methodologies to provide a well-rounded, in-depth examination of the research problems. This design is particularly well-suited to the field of English language education. The study design is shown below:

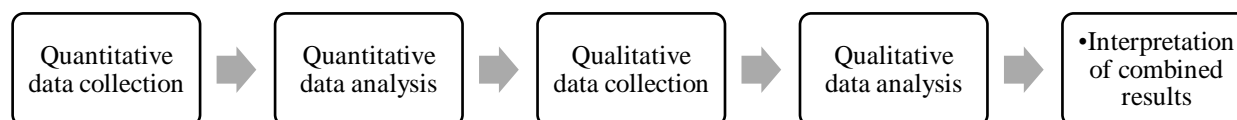


Figure 3.1. Research design

3.2. Research site

This study was conducted at Ba Ria - Vung Tau College of Technology, Campus 1 in Dat Do Town, Ba Ria - Vung Tau Province, and Campus 2 located on 3/2 street, ward 11, Vung Tau City (at the moment known as Ho Chi Minh City). As a public vocational institution under the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (at the moment known as Ministry of Home Affairs), the college offers a wide range of training programs, particularly in engineering, information technology, and foreign languages. The English department plays a crucial role in preparing students for both professional communication and further academic pursuits.

In recent years, the institution has actively integrated digital technology into its teaching practices, especially in English language instruction. Classrooms are equipped with projectors, computers, and internet access to support multimedia-based learning. Teachers are also encouraged to apply various technology-enhanced methods, such as online platforms, interactive applications, and digital storytelling, to foster learner engagement and improve communicative competence.

Given this context, the college provides an ideal environment for exploring how digital tools can support and enhance English-speaking instruction. The choice of this research site is therefore appropriate and relevant to the goals of English language teaching, which focus on integrating technology into language education. The institution's infrastructure, pedagogical orientation, and student demographic offer valuable insights into the real-world application of digital innovation in the classroom. It also illustrates the brand's quality and reputation in a small city.

3.3. Participants

The participants comprised 60 teenage students ($N = 60$), aged 14-18, selected from a total population of 120 learners attending Ba Ria - Vung Tau College of Technology. They were selected through simple random sampling, ensuring that all students had an equal chance of being chosen for the study. The selected students were then evenly assigned to two groups: a control group ($n = 30$) and an experimental group ($n = 30$). While the control group received instruction through traditional teaching methods, the experimental group was exposed to digital storytelling techniques to develop their speaking skills.

In addition to the student participants, the researcher also involved in the research, serving as the primary English teacher delivering the intervention. Besides, two additional English teachers participated in the study as independent raters and classroom observers, while the students served as the main subjects of the investigation.

3.4. Research instruments

Data collection was conducted using a structured questionnaire, which served as a survey instrument to gather relevant information from participants. Respondents were asked to complete the questionnaire and return it for analysis. The instrument comprised various question types, including demographic, attitudinal, behavioural, and closed-ended self-assessment items. As a self-evaluation tool, the questionnaire aimed to capture students' reflections on their learning experiences and their responses to the integration of digital storytelling into English language learning.

A survey to quantitatively evaluate students' confidence and self-perceived progress in speaking skills before and after the application of digital storytelling. In addition to the questionnaire, a semi-structured interview was employed as a qualitative instrument to explore students' motivation, attitudes, and perceptions regarding the use of digital storytelling in speaking lessons. These interviews were conducted with randomly selected participants from both the control and experimental groups. They were



administered twice before and after the implementation of digital storytelling to provide comparative insights into the impact of the approach on students' learning experience.

Furthermore, a speaking test was administered to all participants at the end of the academic term. This test aimed to objectively evaluate learners' speaking proficiency after the treatment. The speaking performance was assessed by two trained raters using standardised IELTS speaking band descriptors to ensure consistency and reliability.

Therefore, these instruments were carefully designed and implemented to triangulate data, providing a comprehensive understanding of the effects of digital storytelling on students' speaking skills.

3.5. Data analysis

SPSS software was used to analyse data. SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) is widely recognised as a reliable statistical tool for producing precise and systematic analyses. By utilising this software, significant patterns and trends in the participants' responses were identified.

Quantitative data was derived from pre- and post-questionnaires and processed using SPSS Version 26 on the Windows 10 platform. A range of descriptive statistical measures, including frequencies, mean scores, standard deviations, and percentage distributions, was calculated to explore general trends. These statistics enabled the researcher to assess shifts in students' speaking performance, motivation, and classroom engagement following the digital storytelling intervention.

The interpretation of mean scores followed the scale proposed by Moidunny (2009):

1.00–1.80: Strongly disagree / Never or almost never true

1.81–2.60: Disagree / Occasionally true

2.61–3.40: Neutral / Sometimes true

3.41–4.20: Agree / Usually true

4.21–5.00: Strongly agree / Always or almost always true

On the other hand, qualitative data was gathered through semi-structured interviews with selected participants. Thematic analysis, as described by Braun and Clarke (2006), was applied to analyse the interview data. This method involves identifying, organising, and interpreting patterns or themes within qualitative responses. Thematic coding allowed the researcher to explore students' perspectives, experiences, and perceptions regarding the use of digital storytelling in speaking lessons. The integration of both quantitative and qualitative findings ensured greater reliability, depth, and a more nuanced understanding of the impact of digital storytelling on students' speaking development.

3.6. Validity and reliability

Validity and reliability are widely recognised as essential criteria in evaluating the quality of quantitative research instruments (Silverman, 2005). In using digital storytelling to improve students' speaking skills, particular attention was given to ensuring the validity and reliability of the tools used to collect both quantitative and qualitative data. Validity refers to the degree to which a research instrument accurately measures the construct it is intended to assess. As defined by Neuman (2003), validity concerns how well the social reality being measured through research matches the constructs researchers use to understand it. In this study, the validity of the quantitative instrument, specifically the student questionnaire, was statistically verified, and the findings demonstrated an acceptable level of construct validity as mentioned in the part of findings and discussion below.

To assess reliability, Cronbach's Alpha coefficients were calculated for the student questionnaire. These coefficients measure the internal consistency of the items. According to Tavakol and Dennick (2011), Cronbach's Alpha can be interpreted as follows:

Below 0.500: poor reliability

0.500 – 0.800: moderate reliability

Above 0.800: good reliability

In addition, George and Mallery (2003) proposed a more detailed classification:

0.900 or above: excellent

0.800 – 0.899: good

0.700 – 0.799: acceptable

0.600 – 0.699: questionable

0.500 – 0.599: poor



Less than 0.500: unacceptable

In this study, descriptive statistics, including frequencies, means, standard deviations, and percentages, were used to examine students’ use of technology-based language-learning strategies. All quantitative data was analysed using SPSS version 26.

For the qualitative data, semi-structured interviews were conducted to explore students’ attitudes and perceptions regarding the use of digital storytelling in improving speaking skills. The data collected from interviews was transcribed and analysed using pattern coding (Bogdan & Biklen, 1994). To enhance the trustworthiness of the qualitative analysis, two researchers independently reviewed the transcripts and coding results, thereby ensuring inter-rater reliability.

To ensure consistency across data sources, the items from both questionnaire and interview guide were aligned under the same thematic categories. This triangulation approach enabled comparison between quantitative and qualitative findings and enhanced the overall validity and reliability of the research outcomes. By establishing strong validity and reliability, this study ensures the credibility of the findings. It provides a solid foundation for evaluating the impact of digital storytelling on students’ speaking skills in the context of English language instruction.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1. Difficulties of students in learning speaking skills

Students revealed that there were some difficulties that they met while learning speaking skills, as presented below:

Table 4.1. Difficulties while learning speaking skills

Questions	Average	Standard deviation	Min	Max
How difficult/easy was it for you to participate in the whole-class discussion?	4,1	0,7	3	5
How difficult/easy was it for you to participate in the small-group discussion?	3,7	0,7	2	5
How difficult/easy was it for you to express yourself fluently, with little pauses and hesitation?	4,2	0,6	3	5
How difficult/easy was it for you to talk in a clear and easily understandable manner?	3,7	0,6	2	5
How difficult/easy was it for you to take turns in a discussion?	3,9	0,6	3	5

Students encountered several notable difficulties in developing their English speaking skills after six weeks of instruction incorporating digital storytelling. Among the five key components of speaking, the most difficult for learners was expressing themselves fluently with minimal pauses or hesitation, which received the highest mean score of 4.2 and a standard deviation of 0.6. This suggests that even with engaging content, students still struggled to maintain a smooth flow of speech. Similarly, participating in whole-class discussions proved to be a significant challenge, with a mean of 4.1 and a standard deviation of 0.7, possibly reflecting a lack of confidence or anxiety when speaking in front of peers. Turn-taking in conversations was also a commonly reported difficulty (mean = 3.9), likely due to limited practice in spontaneous, interactive English dialogues.

Although the average difficulty levels for small-group discussion and speaking clearly were slightly lower (mean = 3.7 for both), they still indicate moderate challenges for learners. The relatively consistent standard deviations across all five items (ranging from 0.6 to 0.7) suggest that students had similar perceptions of these difficulties, with limited variation among individual responses. These results indicate that while digital storytelling may increase student engagement and creativity, it does



not automatically overcome the core barriers to speaking proficiency. Therefore, it is recommended that future instructions incorporate more structured speaking practice, peer collaboration activities, and targeted strategies to build learners' confidence and communicative competence, particularly in real-time classroom interactions. This can help ensure that digital storytelling is supported by a stronger pedagogical framework tailored to students' specific speaking needs at the intermediate level.

4.2. Difficulties of students in using digital storytelling

Students also revealed that there were some difficulties that they met while using digital storytelling, as presented below:

Table 4.2. Difficulties in using digital storytelling

Questions	Average	Standard deviation	Min	Max
How difficult/easy was it for you to find information on the Internet?	2,1	0,7	1	4
How difficult/easy was it for you to work cooperatively with others to create a digital story?	2,5	0,7	1	4
How difficult/easy was it for you to learn about digital instruments?	2,7	0,6	1	4
How difficult/easy was it for you to use digital instruments?	2,7	0,6	1	4
How difficult/easy was it for you to generate new ideas?	3,0	0,6	2	4

The data presented in the table above indicate that, overall, students at Ba Ria - Vung Tau College of Technology did not find digital storytelling highly difficult. Among the five surveyed items, the easiest activity reported by students was finding information on the Internet, with an average score of 2.1 and a standard deviation of 0.7. This indicates that learners felt relatively confident in using online resources, most likely because they are already familiar with navigating the internet in their everyday lives. Additionally, working cooperatively with others to create a digital story was rated low in difficulty (mean = 2.5), suggesting that most students were able to collaborate effectively in groups. This may be due to the structured group work and clear guidance provided by teachers during the storytelling project. The low standard deviation (0.7) also reflects that students' experiences with collaboration were fairly consistent.

In contrast, students perceived slightly more difficulty with learning and using digital tools, with both tasks receiving the same average score of 2.7. This indicates that while these were not seen as major challenges, a number of students may have had limited experience with digital platforms, such as video editing software or audio recording tools, before the project. However, the low standard deviation (0.6) shows that these difficulties were shared by most students to a similar extent, suggesting that the challenges were manageable overall. The most difficult aspect of the storytelling process was generating new ideas, which had the highest mean score of 3.0. This implies that although technical skills and teamwork were not major barriers, students found the creative aspect of building a story to be the most demanding. Developing original content likely required them to think critically, use appropriate vocabulary, and organise their thoughts coherently in English. Overall, while the students showed confidence in using technology and working in teams, additional support might be needed to help them develop ideas more effectively and increase their creativity in storytelling tasks.

The semi-structured interviews also revealed that the students who participated in the actual interviews encountered some obstacles when developing their English speaking skills in a digital storytelling learning environment. The obstacles that many students mentioned were limited vocabulary, lack of confidence to speak in front of the class or in front of the camera during digital storytelling projects, the fear and apprehension of making grammar mistakes or mispronunciations, low level of initiative in communication, lack of exposure to real-life communication situations, time pressure in speaking tests, uneven level of



computer literacy among students. These difficulties reflect the fact that the development of students' speaking skills depends not only on teaching methods but is also strongly influenced by psychological, linguistic, and technical factors. The interaction between these factors creates complex challenges, requiring a multidimensional approach to support learners in making sustainable progress.

4.3. Effectiveness of digital storytelling in improving speaking skills for students

Digital storytelling used in the classroom can help students to improve their speaking skill. Their progress is shown below:

Table 4.3. Pre-test speaking results (based on IELTS band scores)

	Control group	Experimental group
Mean	3.52	3.54
Standard error	0.07	0.07
Median	3.45	3.55
Mode	3.20	3.80
Standard Deviation	0.36	0.36
Sample Variance	0.13	0.13
Kurtosis	- 0.76	- 0.19
Skewness	0.18	- 0.19
Range	1.4	1.5
Minimum	2.8	2.7
Maximum	4.2	4.2
Sum	105.5	106.3
Count	30	30

The results of the Speaking pretest indicate that students in both the control group and the experimental group had almost equivalent English speaking proficiency before the intervention. The control group had a mean score of 3.52, while the experimental group recorded a nearly identical mean of 3.54, showing no substantial difference. This similarity is further reflected in their standard deviation, which was 0.36 for both groups, indicating a consistent level of variation among individual scores. The median scores (3.45 for the control group and 3.55 for the experimental group) and mode scores (3.20 and 3.80, respectively) also suggest that both groups had a comparable central tendency in performance at the starting point.

In addition, the distributions of scores for both groups were relatively normal, as demonstrated by their skewness (0.18 for the control group and -0.19 for the experimental group) and kurtosis values (-0.76 and -0.19, respectively), indicating only slight deviations from normality. The range of scores was 1.4 in the control group and 1.5 in the experimental group, with minimum and maximum values that were closely aligned (2.8 - 4.2 for the control group and 2.7 - 4.2 for the experimental group). Taken together, these results confirm that the two groups were well-matched in terms of English speaking ability prior to the digital storytelling intervention, which provides a reliable basis for assessing the effectiveness of the experimental treatment in the post-test phase.



Table 4.4. Post-test speaking results (based on IELTS band scores)

	Control group	Experimental group
Mean	3.77	4.60
Standard Error	0.06	0.08
Median	3.75	4.65
Mode	3.60	5.10
Standard Deviation	0.31	0.46
Sample Variance	0.10	0.22
Kurtosis	- 0.72	- 0.54
Skewness	0.19	0.03
Range	1.2	1.8
Minimum	3.2	3.8
Maximum	4.4	5.6
Sum	113.1	137.9
Count	30	30

The Speaking post-test results demonstrate a clear difference in speaking proficiency outcomes between the experimental and control group after the application of digital storytelling as an instructional approach. The experimental group achieved a mean score of 4.60, significantly higher than the control group's 3.77, indicating a notable improvement in speaking skills among those who engaged in digital storytelling activities. This difference is also reflected in the median scores (4.65 for the experimental vs. 3.75 for the control) and the mode scores (5.10 vs. 3.60), suggesting that the experimental group not only outperformed on average but also had a higher concentration of top performers. These results point to a positive impact of the digital storytelling method on students' speaking proficiency at Ba Ria - Vung Tau College of Technology, particularly in enhancing their ability to express themselves clearly and confidently.

In terms of score distribution, the standard deviation was higher in the experimental group (0.46) than in the control group (0.31), indicating greater variability in performance. This could be attributed to individual differences in creativity, digital literacy, or levels of engagement during the digital storytelling process. The score range was also wider for the experimental group (1.8 vs. 1.2), further reflecting this variation. Despite these differences, both groups displayed relatively normal distributions, as shown by skewness (0.19 and 0.03) and kurtosis values (-0.72 and -0.54), suggesting no major statistical anomalies. Overall, while both groups showed some improvement from their pretest scores, the experimental group's progress was substantially more pronounced, providing evidence that digital storytelling may be an effective strategy to boost speaking proficiency in EFL learners, especially in vocational or technical education contexts like that of Ba Ria - Vung Tau College of Technology.



Table 4.5. One-way ANOVA of differences between experimental and control groups

Descriptives								
Posttest_Band	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Control group	30	3.7700	.30978	.05656	3.6543	3.8857	3.20	4.40
Experimental group	30	4.5967	.46497	.08489	4.4230	4.7703	3.80	5.60
Total	60	4.1833	.57199	.07384	4.0356	4.3311	3.20	5.60

ANOVA					
Posttest_Band	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	10.251	1	10.251	65.676	.000
Within Groups	9.053	58	.156		
Total	19.303	59			

The descriptive statistics reveal a clear and substantial difference in Speaking posttest results between the control and experimental group following the implementation of digital storytelling. The experimental group achieved a mean score of 4.60 with a standard deviation of 0.46, while the control group had a mean of 3.77 and a standard deviation of 0.31. This difference of approximately 0.83 band points is both statistically and pedagogically significant, suggesting that the students who engaged in digital storytelling tasks made notably greater progress in their speaking proficiency.

Furthermore, the 95% confidence interval for the experimental group’s mean was [4.4230, 4.7703], which does not overlap with that of the control group [3.6543, 3.8857], reinforcing the conclusion that the observed difference is unlikely to have occurred by chance. To further validate the effectiveness of digital storytelling as a teaching intervention, a one-way ANOVA was conducted. The test produced an F-value of 65.676 with a significance level (p-value) of .000, which is far below the conventional threshold of $p < .001$. This indicates that the difference in post-test speaking scores between the two groups is highly statistically significant. The sum of squares between groups was 10.251, accounting for a substantial proportion of the total variation (19.303), which highlights the impact of the experimental treatment.

Hence, these statistical findings confirm that digital storytelling had a positive, measurable effect on students’ speaking performance at Ba Ria - Vung Tau College of Technology. The results provide strong empirical support for incorporating digital storytelling into language pedagogy, particularly for enhancing learners’ expressive ability, confidence, and engagement in speaking tasks.

Analysis of semi-structured interview data showed that the application of digital storytelling had a significant positive impact on the development of students’ English speaking skills, especially in the areas of fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary and communication confidence. Many students from high-, medium-, to low-scoring groups commented that this form of learning provided a more interactive and realistic language-practice environment than the traditional method. One of the most notable improvements was the increase in speaking confidence. Participating in the process of creating and retelling their own stories, with support from images, audio, and video, helped students reduce the psychological pressure compared to speaking in front of the class in a conventional test format.

4.4. Attitudes toward the use of digital storytelling

4.4.1. Attitudes of teachers

Results from interviews and observations show that teachers perceive digital storytelling as an innovative teaching method that can stimulate student interest and improve students’ speaking skills. Many teachers appreciate the combination of storytelling and technology, as it not only creates a lively learning environment but also helps students approach English through context-rich situations, rather than being limited to the traditional lecture format. A highlight of teacher feedback is the positive evaluation of its ability to promote learning motivation.

During the practical teaching process, teachers found that students were more proactive in preparing content, practising and perfecting their storytelling products. This process helped students reduce the pressure of conventional examinations, while turning speaking practice into a creative experience in which students learned language while developing technology and



teamwork skills. Teachers also noted that digital storytelling facilitated a more comprehensive assessment of students' speaking abilities. Through digital products, teachers could consider not only fluency, vocabulary, pronunciation and grammar, but also the ability to convey ideas, use non-verbal language and interact with content.

This result provides a multi-dimensional assessment perspective, helping teachers accurately identify each student's strengths and areas for improvement. However, some teachers also expressed concerns about the time pressure and technical requirements when implementing this method. Instructing students on how to use editing, recording, or video editing software sometimes takes longer than the teaching plan allows. In addition, not all students are proficient in technology, leading to differences in progress between groups. However, the majority of teachers believe that these difficulties can be overcome through training in technology skills before the project begins, or by assigning appropriate roles within the student group. Thus, teachers' attitudes towards the use of digital storytelling are positive and open. They evaluate this method as suitable for the trend toward technology-integrated education and at the same time, contribute to improving the quality of teaching speaking skills if implemented with a clear plan and adequate technical support.

4.4.2. Attitudes of students

On the one hand, attitudes of students towards communication and speaking skills are illustrated as below:

Table 4.6. Attitudes of students

Questions	Average	Min	Max	Standard deviation
When I share something with my friends, I am open and honest about what I am sharing	3.38	2	4	0.71
I think before I speak because I am aware of how words may not mean the same thing to other people that they do to me	3.22	2	4	0.69
I understand that sometimes the message the other person is sending may not be the same one I am receiving	3.45	2	4	0.67
Before I communicate, verbally or non-verbally, I fully understand who my receiver is and how my message might affect his or her reception of my message	3.23	2	4	0.76
As I communicate with someone, I am looking for cues that my message is being perceived as I intended it to be received	3.42	2	4	0.71
I make my messages as precise and to the point as possible	3.32	2	4	0.72
I deliberately avoid the use of slang words and idioms with those who may be offended by them	1.47	0	3	0.85
I try not to use words that might cause an emotional response that may distress or confuse the receiver of my message	1.45	0	3	0.74



I recognise my communication interaction to determine what nonverbal messages I send and how well those imitate the meaning I wish to get across	3.27	2	4	0.79
I carefully consider the method of delivery for my message: a face-to-face meeting, over the telephone, or in writing. Which would be best understood by my receiver?	3.28	2	4	0.82
I form opinions about what others say to me based on what I hear them saying, rather than what I think of them as a person	3.38	2	4	0.69
I make an honest effort to listen to ideas with which I do not agree	3.33	2	4	0.79
I look for ways to expand my listening skills	3.23	2	4	0.74
I use my jargon with those who may not understand it	3.23	2	4	0.82
I use jargon with those who may not understand it	1.40	0	3	0.88
Total	44.07	37	50	3.22

The analysis of students’ attitudes towards communication, based on the Week 3 self-assessment survey, revealed a generally positive orientation among the teenage participants at Ba Ria - Vung Tau College of Technology. The average total score was 44.07 out of a maximum of 60, with a standard deviation of 3.22, suggesting that while the majority of students showed consistent communicative awareness, there was still moderate variation in their perceptions and behaviours.

Many of the highest-rated items demonstrated thoughtful, intentional communication. The statement “I understand that sometimes the message the other person is sending may not be the same one I am receiving” had the highest mean score of 3.45, with a standard deviation of 0.67. This result indicates that students are relatively aware of potential miscommunication, an important foundation for developing effective speaking and listening skills. Other positively rated items included “I am open and honest about what I am sharing with my friends” (mean = 3.38, standard deviation = 0.71), “I form opinions about what others say to me based on what I hear them saying rather than what I think of them as a person” (mean = 3.38, standard deviation = 0.69), and “As I communicate to someone, I am looking for cues that my message is being perceived as I intended it to be received” (mean = 3.42, standard deviation = 0.71). These responses suggest that students are developing the ability to monitor both content and relational aspects of communication, which is critical in oral language performance.

On the other hand, some responses revealed limitations in students’ sensitivity to emotional or cultural aspects of communication. The lowest-rated items were “I deliberately avoid the use of slang words and idioms with those who may be offended by them” with a mean score of 1.47 (standard deviation = 0.85), and “I try not to use words that might cause an emotional response that may distress or confuse the receiver of my message” (mean score = 1.45, standard deviation = 0.74). These findings imply that while students may be competent in understanding and expressing ideas, they may lack awareness of the emotional consequences of their language. This is especially important in the context of English as a Foreign Language, where learners must develop not only linguistic but also sociolinguistic competence.

Interestingly, one item, “I use my jargon with those who may not understand it”, appeared twice in the dataset, once with a mean score of 3.23 and once with a lower mean score of 1.40 (standard deviation = 0.88). This discrepancy may indicate either a duplication error or confusion among respondents regarding the question’s intent. However, if interpreted directly, the lower score is preferable, as it reflects an awareness of avoiding inaccessible language. Students’ attitudes towards communication were



largely positive and aligned with effective speaking behaviours. However, the findings also highlight a need to strengthen students' awareness of audience sensitivity, emotional intelligence, and appropriateness of language in diverse social contexts. Given the nature of this research, investigating the impact of digital storytelling on speaking skills, these insights are valuable in guiding further instructional focus on both expressive and receptive aspects of communicative competence.

On the other hand, results from semi-structured interviews showed that the majority of students expressed interest and positive attitudes towards the use of digital storytelling in speaking practice. Many students said that this method provided a new learning experience, different from conventional speaking practice, thanks to the combination of images, sounds and creative content elements. Being directly involved in the process of building the story, choosing illustrations and dubbing the voice-over helped students feel more attached to their learning products, thereby increasing their motivation to practice English.

Another benefit that many students highlighted was the marked improvement in their confidence in communicating. The process of practising recording or presenting a story created a safe environment, helping them to reduce their anxiety about speaking in front of a crowd. Students also noted that digital storytelling helped them expand their vocabulary, improve their pronunciation, and express their ideas more clearly. Many also said that this method encouraged them to set clearer learning goals and actively seek out materials to complete their storytelling products. Despite the positive reviews, some opinions held that digital storytelling requires significant preparation time and technological skills that not all students are proficient at.

Some students found it difficult to edit videos or process audio, especially when meeting deadlines. However, most students said that teacher support and group work helped overcome these obstacles. Overall, students' attitudes towards digital storytelling were positive, with high appreciation for its creativity, ability to apply technology, and effectiveness in developing English speaking skills. This approach not only brings excitement to learning but also creates a comprehensive training environment that combines language, soft skills, and technological competencies.

4.5. Discussions

The results of this study strongly reinforce the value of digital storytelling as an effective tool for enhancing speaking skills among teenage EFL learners in Vietnam, particularly at Ba Ria - Vung Tau College of Technology. The post-test speaking results indicated that students in the experimental group significantly outperformed those in the control group, with a mean band score of 5.60 compared to 4.77. This improvement confirms that digital storytelling does more than engage students. It also contributes to measurable academic outcomes. Importantly, the experimental and control groups had nearly identical pre-test scores (4.54 and 4.52, respectively), which reinforces the validity of this comparison. Digital storytelling provided students with meaningful, context-rich speaking opportunities that allowed them to rehearse, revise, and deliver their stories, leading to increased fluency, more confident pronunciation, and better organisation of ideas. These findings are consistent with the previous studies (Asrifan et al., 2020; Anderson, 2017), which highlighted that integrating narrative-based tasks into language lessons promotes higher learner engagement, fluency, and the use of more complex sentence structures. At Ba Ria - Vung Tau College of Technology, students became not just speakers, but storytellers, giving them ownership of their content and purpose for their language use.

In addition to test results, the speaking survey and semi-structured interviews revealed insights into students' perceived difficulties, which explain why digital storytelling was particularly effective in this context. Students reported the greatest difficulty with fluency, often hesitating or pausing due to limited vocabulary and a lack of automaticity. Speaking confidently in front of the whole class was also cited as a major barrier, especially among students with average or low English levels. These findings align with earlier studies in similar Asian EFL contexts (Liu & Littlewood, 1997; Nguyen Thi Thuy Hue, 2023), which found that learners were passive in oral interactions due to fear of mistakes and low self-confidence. Digital storytelling allowed students to overcome some of these psychological barriers by offering opportunities to rehearse their speech multiple times before recording. This reduced the pressure of instant performance and enabled students to refine their language output. Moreover, the creative and visual aspects of storytelling provided scaffolds for organising content, supporting idea generation, and enhancing memory retention. As learners were actively involved in the planning, scripting, and production of stories, they developed greater confidence in using English in meaningful ways. In interviews, many students expressed pride in their final video projects, and some even said they had rewatched their own videos several times to improve pronunciation and fluency.

While the overall experience with digital storytelling was positive, the study also identified several challenges related to its implementation, particularly regarding the use of technology and the cognitive load involved in story creation. The difficulty ratings in the digital storytelling survey were moderate, suggesting that although students were familiar with technology, some



aspects, such as learning new digital tools or editing multimedia content, remained challenging. Generating new ideas for stories was rated the most difficult (mean = 3.0), suggesting that students found it easier to use the tools than to develop original content. This is a significant insight, as it points to the need for additional instructional support during the brainstorming and scripting stages. Students may benefit from guided frameworks, sample stories, or collaborative mind-mapping to ease the cognitive demand of idea generation. Additionally, although most students successfully navigated basic digital tools, some still struggled with editing or uploading their final products, which could detract from their focus on language development. Therefore, teachers need to plan for technical instruction as part of the learning sequence and allocate time to teach both language and digital literacy skills. The role of teachers as facilitators in this process is crucial; they must be ready to troubleshoot, guide, and encourage students throughout each phase of the digital storytelling journey.

Finally, the findings of this study have broader implications for teaching speaking skills in Vietnamese EFL contexts, especially in private institutions like Ba Ria - Vung Tau College of Technology. Traditional speaking activities in Vietnamese classrooms tend to be exam-oriented and heavily focused on grammar and accuracy, with limited attention given to fluency or creativity. In such environments, students often memorise dialogues or model answers rather than engage in authentic communication. This study provides evidence that digital storytelling can shift that paradigm by promoting real-world language use, creativity, and learner autonomy. The method supports integrated skill development, blending listening, speaking, writing, and reading while also encouraging collaboration, critical thinking, and self-reflection.

Moreover, both students and teachers responded positively to this approach. Teachers noted increased student motivation, improved pronunciation and vocabulary use, and stronger engagement during lessons. From a pedagogical standpoint, digital storytelling aligns well with communicative and task-based language teaching frameworks, which are increasingly advocated in modern EFL curricula. However, to scale this method effectively, schools must provide access to necessary resources, including devices, software, and training sessions. It is also essential to build in flexibility for students with lower technological proficiency, ensuring equitable access to the benefits of digital storytelling. As Vietnam continues to integrate technology into education, methods like digital storytelling have strong potential to bridge the gap between language knowledge and communicative competence, particularly among young learners preparing for high-stakes exams like IELTS.

5. CONCLUSIONS

This study was conducted to investigate how digital storytelling helps to improve the English speaking skills of students at Ba Ria - Vung Tau College of Technology, and to survey the attitudes of teachers and students towards this teaching method. Given the practical difficulties learners encounter, including hesitation, limited fluency, and limited participation in research discussions, the question of whether digital storytelling can become a useful and effective teaching tool was raised. The results showed that digital storytelling had a significant positive impact on students' speaking ability.

The pre-experimental Speaking test showed no significant difference between the experimental and control groups, thereby ensuring comparability. However, the post-experimental results confirmed that the experimental group, the group that applied digital storytelling, achieved significantly better results. Improvements were evident in fluency, pronunciation, and organisation, suggesting that the storytelling tasks encouraged students to produce more coherent and confident speech.

In addition to quantitative improvements, the study also provided insights into students' difficulties and perceptions. Survey and interview results showed that although learners initially struggled with fluency and confidence when speaking in front of the class, practising, recording, and editing multiple times helped reduce pressure and improve their expressive ability. Storytelling provided a more engaging, creative and less stressful learning environment, thereby motivating learners. The final digital storytelling products also became a source of pride for students, further reinforcing their initiative in learning.

In terms of attitudes, both teachers and students expressed positive views of this method. Teachers reported improvements in student engagement, interest and vocabulary, while students appreciated being able to connect language skills to practical creative activities. However, the study also highlighted challenges in technology skills and in developing ideas, underscoring the need for teacher support and guidance.



In sum, the study's findings confirm that digital storytelling is not merely a technological tool but a comprehensive pedagogical method capable of transforming the traditional approach to teaching and learning foreign languages. The successful application at Ba Ria - Vung Tau College of Technology can serve as a basis for expanding research and implementation at other educational institutions, including high schools and universities. Thus, the most important implication is that digital storytelling should be viewed as a long-term teaching strategy, closely linked to the process of educational innovation with learners at the centre, while making the most of the advantages of technology in the context of globalisation and international integration.

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