

Improving First-Year English-Majored Students' Speaking Skills through Using Digital Storytelling

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ABSTRACT

Keywords: digital storytelling, English speaking skill, English speaking confidence, motivation

This study aims to investigate the effectiveness of digital storytelling on Vietnamese first-year English-majored students' English-speaking learning at a university in Vietnam. In this study, the students were asked to create English-dubbed animated stories with different topics relating to their speaking lessons by using the Movie Adventure application. Methods for data collection were speaking pre-and post-tests, questionnaires, and interviews. The findings revealed that using digital storytelling as a pedagogical tool for practicing English speaking benefited students' speaking ability. The findings also showed that engaging in the content of stories not only encouraged students' motivation but instilled their confidence to speak in English. The results of the given questionnaires and interviews showed that students responded positively to the implementation of digital storytelling, which facilitated learning by allowing learners to interact and collaborate in English. From the results gained, it was concluded that digital storytelling can be used to create a dynamic speaking learning environment that helps students participate actively in their English-speaking lessons during their learning time.

Introduction

Speaking is considered a way for speakers to communicate with their listeners and share their ideas (Fauzan, 2014). For English as a second language (EFL) learners, achieving a good speaking skill is one of the most important indicators of mastering a language (Ur, 2012). Despite being aware of the importance of English speaking skills, many students still have difficulties speaking English as they do not have sufficient vocabulary sources, and English language structures make their oral communication influential and reluctant (Fauzan, 2014). Additionally, Al-Wossabi (2016) states that it is not easy for EFL students to ask simple questions even if they have learned English for several years. However, it is argued by Zhang (2009) that years of exposure do not affect the EFL students' ability in English, but an

opportunity for them to use the language is a vital factor directly influencing students' English speaking ability. The author also claims that a chance to practice or use language both inside and outside the classroom as much as possible can improve students' English speaking skills (Zhang, 2009). Teachers, in addition, also need some help with their students, such as mother tongue use, shyness, low participation of individuals, etc., in teaching speaking skills when asking their students to get involved in speaking activities (Ur, 2012).

In Vietnam, English is taught as a compulsory subject at schools, but students' English proficiency is low as they have limited opportunities to use the language (Le & Phan, 2023), so when speaking English, they have little accuracy, confidence, and fluency (Vo et al., 2018). When entering the university, as a result, first-year English-majored students still need help to achieve English speaking skills fully (Nguyen et al., 2023; Nguyen & Tong, 2024). In pre-study research, the authors of this study also found that first-year English-majored students are reluctant to speak English, and the students mentioned both internal and external challenges, especially since most of the students emphasized a lack of English-speaking environment to use the language (Tuong, 2022). In addition, they also showed that during their school years, they focused on learning grammatical rules to pass their exams without participating in speaking activities. Similarly, Harmer (2007) claims that it is essential for English teachers to create a good English-speaking environment and activities for their students to practice the language to improve their speaking skills, and one of the most effective activities for speaking is storytelling.

According to Somdee and Suppasetsee (2012), storytelling is a technique that allows learners to participate in speaking activities. Storytelling has been utilized for many years to impart personal knowledge and anecdotes, and it is also frequently employed to improve students' speaking and listening skills (Lwin, 2016). This indicates that using storytelling as a learning strategy to help people understand their tales and share experiences with their audience is the same as using storytelling as a process of meaning-making (Nampaktai & Suksiripakonchai, 2018). In the era of advanced technology, digital storytelling is a contemporary method of conveying stories that combines storytelling with multimedia (Razmi et al., 2014).

Digital storytelling is a strategy to teach English that is interesting and engaging. It allows students to improve their academic standards, knowledge, and skill levels (Windy Astuti & Chakim, 2023). Therefore, digital storytelling can be used as a teaching and learning tool for students to develop their speaking features, such as vocabulary, fluency, pronunciation, grammar, and comprehension (Idayani, 2019). Besides improving speaking skills, using digital storytelling can enhance students' creative and critical thinking, self-confidence, and motivation (Yang, Chen, & Hung, 2020).

From the above-mentioned benefits, it is reasonable to assume that learning through digital storytelling increases Vietnamese first-year English-majored students' speaking ability, confidence, and motivation.

Literature review

Digital Storytelling

Different researchers have defined digital storytelling. According to Nair and Yunus (2022), digital storytelling is a form of telling stories through using digital media. In other words, this is a contemporary method in that the storyteller utilizes media sources to tell their own stories. When expressing their ideas, students can develop their speaking skills (Nair & Yunus, 2021). In another way, Gurrieri and Drenten (2018) suggested that digital storytelling is known as using digital technology to tell a story. The authors believe that the learners will enhance their oral communication ability while self-describing their own tales. However, the researchers (Mirza, 2020; Badawi et al., 2022; Arroba & Acosta, 2021) recommended that the length of the story should be short from 2 to 3 minutes and use a digital format that is compatible software to be able to place video files. More importantly, the teller should tell stories by using her/his own voice and adding her/his own personal touch to the narratives (Badawi et al., 2022), which are planned, written, modified, and clarified by the teller himself/herself to appeal the listener through communication (Arroba & Acosta, 2021).

Relations between speaking and digital storytelling

Vietnamese students are only exposed to English inside the classroom when they are at school. There has not been much attention to improving the EFL learners' speaking skills due to the focus on fostering the students' learning of grammar and vocabulary for exams. As a result, the students have limited opportunities to build their knowledge of English speaking (Tuong, 2022).

A significant amount of studies have reported the advantages of using digital storytelling in improving students' English-speaking ability. A study by Rubinni et al. (2019) stated that digital storytelling during their English-speaking lessons can help students improve their speaking skills. The authors revealed that digital storytelling's elements and characteristics enhance the learners' English speaking ability more efficiently. The learners find it easy to create stories based on their personal experience so they can understand the content of the stories and take advantage of opportunities to improve their speaking fluency at the same time. In their study in 2014, Razmi et al. reported that the students are better at speaking English when using the English language in their stories with meaningful and authentic contexts. Malita and Martin (2010) were in line with this point when showing that through the process of creating, sharing, and evaluating stories, the learners grab the chance to use the language and develop their speaking skills. It is clearly seen that the studies positively impacted using digital storytelling to improve students' speaking skills.

Effects of digital stories on English-speaking motivation and confidence

In a language class, confidence and motivation to speak the language students are learning are essential, so teachers need to find ways to help their learners be interested in their learning. Lei (2010) asserted that extrinsically driven students rely on incentives and desired outcomes to keep them motivated. Moreover, students who lack intrinsic motivation may perform worse academically than those who do. Gardner (2007) addressed motivation in the classroom and named it "classroom learning motivation", regardless of the motivation's intrinsic or extrinsic source.

According to Gurler (2015), there are numerous obstacles to speaking. If the learners lack self-confidence, which can be categorized as a psychological barrier, they will find it difficult to communicate in both their native and foreign languages. According to Druckman and Jork (1994), since performance accomplishments are derived from an individual's personal mastery experiences, they should offer the most reliable confidence information. The level of confidence will rise if these experiences are consistently perceived as successes, and vice versa. If the students frequently lose their motivation and confidence, hindering their language learning, teachers must stop engaging in such demotivating behaviors. Instead, they should boost their students's motivation and self-confidence to learn. Learning speaking through digital storytelling can be a technique that helps teachers enhance their students' motivation and confidence.

According to Gheghesh (2010), using digital storytelling in EFL lessons boosts students' motivation and facilitates their learning. When teaching pupils a foreign language, digital storytelling uses computer technologies and the power to narrate and construct stories while inspiring them to apply higher-order thinking skills. When students use technology to use digital material to communicate their own personal tales, it makes them more willing to participate in class activities.

Researchers Nampaktai and Sukriripakonchai (2018) looked into how students' confidence levels were affected by digital storytelling. They found that learners' speaking abilities changed significantly after utilizing digital storytelling. The majority of students reported that using digital storytelling improved their confidence and ability to speak English.

In summary, the literature review appears to provide solid evidence regarding the efficacy of digital storytelling in enhancing learners' oral communication abilities. There is a wealth of data supporting the impact of digital storytelling on students' motivation and sense of self-confidence in the classroom. The desire of students to study EFL appears to be positively impacted by digital storytelling. This, in turn, raises students' interest in the language and in using it, at least in the classroom, which eventually helps them become more proficient speakers. From the provided evidence, this research will examine the effectiveness of digital storytelling on first-year Vietnamese English majors' English-speaking proficiency, motivation, and confidence.

Research Questions

To conduct this study, there are two main aims that need to be achieved as follows:

1. To examine how effective using digital storytelling is on Vietnamese first-year English-majored students' English-speaking ability
2. To investigate the level of motivation and confidence Vietnamese first-year English-majored students achieve after using digital storytelling in their speaking class

To fulfill the aforementioned purposes, the study sought to answer the following research questions:

1. To what extent does using digital storytelling in speaking class improve students' English speaking ability?
2. To what extent does using digital storytelling in speaking class foster students' English-speaking motivation and confidence?

Methods

Pedagogical Setting & Participants

The participants in this study are 60 first-year English majors (52 female and eight male) divided into two groups (control and experimental groups) at a university in Vietnam. Listening and Speaking Skills 2 is the second course among six compulsory courses that they have to fulfill to achieve a B1 level in listening and speaking skills according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) scale. Before enrolling in this course, the students had already passed their first course, which was equivalent to the A2 level. Therefore, their language ability was quite similar as they had a pre-intermediate level of English proficiency.

Design of the Study

To investigate the effectiveness of using digital storytelling on first-year English-majored students' English speaking ability, motivation and confidence, a quasi-experimental approach in the design of one control and one experimental group pre-and post-tests with both qualitative and quantitative data analysis was employed to conduct this research. For the purposes of the study, quantitative data has been collected from test results and survey questionnaires. Semi-structured interviews following up the questionnaires and discovering more about students' motivation and confidence were used to gain qualitative data. The interviews consisted of open questions, and the participants felt free to share their ideas (Cresswell & Cresswell, 2017).

Procedure

The course lasted for 14 weeks and followed the students' timetable for the semester. The students will have five periods (50 minutes each) of learning listening and speaking skills every week. The researchers met the study group and explained the objectives of the study and how students should make and present their digital stories. The intervention of using digital storytelling will be applied in two periods per week for the experimental group in the classroom following their speaking topics in the syllabus. The control group also follows the same syllabus without using the digital storytelling technique.

In the first meeting, the teacher introduced several digital stories to the students, gave different examples based on speaking topics in the course syllabus, and answered all the questions they had. The students were also advised to combine images, audio, and animated clips using the Movie Adventure application, a free app used to assist students in creating videos for digital storytelling activities in the study. When having the content of a story, learners can access the

app, choose backgrounds, characters, and music, and add their voices to make their own movies. It is easy to change the scene or pause the movie if they have some problems while building up their stories and saving their files for their learning purposes. The researcher and teachers who were responsible for teaching the course administered pre-intervention speaking skills tests to both groups of students.

For the following sessions during the course, the procedure in the classroom was done as below:

- Step 1: The teacher divided the students into groups of 5 and provided them with the speaking topic of the week.
- Step 2: The teacher explained and guided students to cooperate together on the digital storytelling activity
- Step 3: Students were asked to work together, narrow the topic, brainstorm the ideas for the story, and write down the story. After that, they will use the Adventure Movie app to create pictures and backgrounds, choose suitable characters, and insert voice, music, and sound effects if necessary.
- Step 4: The students presented their stories, and the other groups responded by asking questions and making comments.
- Step 5: The teacher led the class to discuss, gave feedback, and scored the students' work.

The researcher and teachers administered student post-tests to both groups in the last meeting. In an experimental group, the students were asked to complete a survey after using digital storytelling, and 10 students were randomly selected to be interviewed to collect data for the study.

Data collection & analysis

Speaking Tests

Pre- and post-tests were adapted from the Key English Test from Cambridge English Preliminary (2018). The tests included two parts and lasted from 8-10 minutes. Students took the first part for about 5-6 minutes, during which the examiners asked them about personal information. In the second part, each participant was asked to talk to another participant about two situations presented on a cue card. The speaking tests were taken in the course's first and last weeks. The students' English speaking proficiency was independently assessed in the form of an oral exam with the researcher and the English teacher, who have been trained to evaluate speaking skills professionally. Based on the student's list and the format of the speaking tests, the examiners tested each pair of students at one time. After the first pair completed their test, there was the turn of another pair. The process continued until the last pair of the list. Simultaneously, participants' oral performance was recorded to ensure that the researchers could use them later for re-checking if necessary. To ensure the reliability and validity of the test results, the examiners were given a rubric with five different criteria (grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, fluency, and organization) with a scale of 0 to 10. Each scale was described in great detail, which guided the examiners to give the best score for each candidate.

The test results were analyzed using SPSS 26 software to get descriptive statistics of dependent variables on tests to answer the research question of whether learning to speak through digital storytelling affects students' speaking skills. The researchers used a paired-sample t-test to ensure the significant difference in English speaking skills and digital storytelling prior to and after the intervention plan.

Questionnaires

At the end of the semester, 30 English-majored students from the experimental group were asked to complete a five-point Likert scale survey questionnaire, which included 11 items adapted from Griffie (1997) and Murad et al. (2023) divided into two sections. The first section consisted of five questions about the students' motivation to speak English after learning through digital storytelling. The second section included six items used to find out how confident the participants were after learning to speak through digital storytelling. The teacher who was responsible for the English Listening and Speaking two courses and the researchers conducted the survey. The students were given a paper-based questionnaire and instructions to provide their responses. The collected feedback was then transferred to SPSS for data analysis.

Semi-structured interview

10 students were randomly selected to provide an in-depth understanding of how digital storytelling intervention plans affected learners' motivation and confidence to learn and their English-speaking competence. The interview guiding questions focused on asking the participants to explain their questionnaire choices. The interview procedure was conducted in Vietnamese so the participants could express their opinions freely without language difficulties. The interviews were recorded with the participants' permission. They all were translated and transcribed verbatim and later coded by themes for data analysis.

Results/Findings

Effectiveness of learning English speaking through digital storytelling

The first purpose of the study is to examine whether using digital storytelling intervention in speaking class improves students' English speaking ability or not. Both the control and experimental groups did the tests before and after the intervention.

The result of the pre-test

Table 1

The result of the pre-test of the control group

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Pre-Grammar-Control group	30	4.0	7.5	6.400	.9414
Pre-Vocabulary-Control group	30	4.5	7.5	6.250	.9168
Pre-Pronunciation-Control group	30	4.5	7.5	5.917	.8816
Pre-Fluency-Control group	30	4.0	7.0	5.483	.9955
Pre-Organization-Control group	30	4.0	7.5	6.267	.9890
Valid N (listwise)	30				
Average	30	4.2	7.4	6.0634	.94486

Table 2

The result of the pre-test of the experimental group

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Pre-Grammar-Exp.Group	30	5.0	7.5	6.350	.8216
Pre-Vocabulary-Exp.Group	30	4.0	7.0	6.067	.9714
Pre-Pronunciation-Exp.Group	30	4.0	7.5	5.750	1.0728
Pre-Fluency-Exp.Group	30	4.0	7.0	5.500	.9377
Pre-Organization-Exp.Group	30	4.0	7.5	6.100	.8944
Valid N (listwise)	30				
Average	30	4.2	7.3	5.9534	.93958

As can be seen in Table 1 and Table 2, the differences in the average results of the participants' speaking skills were insignificant among students in the control (average=6.0634) and experimental (average=5.9534) groups. The average of each component was low, and the weaknesses of the students' speaking skills were mainly in their pronunciation and fluency components.

The result of post-test

Table 3

The result of the Paired Sample T-Test of the control group

Paired Samples Statistics					
	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	
Pair 1 PreTContr Result	6.063	30	.8381	.1530	
PoTContr Result	6.387	30	.5399	.0986	

Paired Samples Test									
		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	PreTContr Result- PoTControl Result	-.3233	.4256	.0777	-.4823	-.1644	-4.161	29	.000

As can be seen in Table 3, although the results saw an increase in total, it is not surprising that the overall average score of the students' speaking skills did not significantly change (mean=6.063 for the pre-test and mean=6.387 for the post-test). This can be considered the fact that the control group did not participate in the intervention.

Table 4

The result of Paired Sample T-Test of the experimental group

		Paired Samples Statistics							
		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean				
Pair 1	PreTExp-Result	5.953	30	.8731	.1594				
	PoTExp-Result	6.683	30	.8379	.1530				

		Paired Samples Test							Sig. (2-tailed)
		Paired Differences		95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df		
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Lower				Upper
Pair 1	PreTExp Result – PoTExp Result	-.7033	.2710	.0495	-.8045	-.6021	-14.216	29	.000

The test result from Table 4 for the experimental group showed a mean of the pre-test (5.953) and post-test (6.683), Standard deviation (0.2710), Standard error mean (0.2710), upper difference (0.6021), and lower difference (0.8045). The result of the T-test was 14.216 with df 26 and the Sig. (2-tailed) (0.000). It is clearly seen that Sig (2-tailed) was not higher than 0.005 ($0.000 < 0.005$), so it can be stated that students' speaking skills improved and students' speaking performance was demonstrated in the result of pre-and post-test results and the paired sample t-test. The significant difference between averages of test results during pre-and post-tests indicated the success of using digital storytelling as an effective method to enhance students' speaking ability. To carefully examine the level of improvement of each component of speaking skills, Table 5 presents the differences in the results of each aspect of speaking skill.

Table 5

A detailed comparison of the result of five criteria assessed in the pre- and post-test of the experimental group

English Speaking ability (total score = 10 points)	Pre-test		Post-test		Mean Difference	t	Sig.
	Mean scores	SD	Mean scores	SD			
1. Grammar	6.350	.8216	6.983	.7711	0.6333	-6.836	.000
2. Vocabulary	6.067	.9714	6.700	.9154	0.6333	-6.420	.000
3. Pronunciation	5.750	1.0728	6.550	.8744	0.8000	-8.733	.000
4. Fluency	5.533	1.0080	6.517	1.0212	0.9833	-16.109	.000
5. Organization	6.200	.8964	6.667	.8644	0.4667	-5.215	.000
Total mean scores	29.9	4.7702	33.417	4.4465	3.5166	-43.313	.000

* $P < .05$, $n = 30$, $df = 29$

As shown in Table 5, the detailed results of each criterion also indicated an increase between pre-test and post-test results. The mean difference of scores ranged from 0.44667 to 0.9833. Notably, the mean

score of pre-and post-pronunciation and fluency increased more than the other three criteria, from 5.750 to 6.550 (mean difference = 0.8000) and 5.533 to 6.517 for fluency (mean difference =0.9833). From the results analyzed, it can be concluded that there was a significant difference between the pre- and post-test results of five aspects of speaking, especially pronunciation and fluency.

Effectiveness of using digital storytelling on students' level of English speaking motivation

Table 6

Findings from students' English-speaking motivation

	Motivation in learning English	Motivation in using gained knowledge in life	Motivation in using the course material	Motivation in understanding and speaking English with the others	Motivation in looking for chances to speak English
N Valid	30	30	30	30	30
Missing	0	0	0	0	0
Mean	3.33	3.27	3.63	3.70	3.80
Std. Deviation	1.184	1.015	.999	1.022	.805
Minimum	1	1	1	1	2
Maximum	5	5	5	5	5

* Notes: - Five levels according to Likert-5-point scale were used to classify level of agreement of the questionnaire: 1 = Very Low, 2 = Below Average, 3 = Average, 4 = Above Average, and 5 = Very High

- The interpretation of mean scores of motivation and confidence were defined as follows: 1.00-1.50 = Very Low, 1.51-2.50 = Below Average, 2.51-3.50 = Average, 3.51-4.50 = Above Average, and 4.51-5.00 = Very High

In Table 6, students' motivation level was assessed through five questions in the questionnaire with statements about motivation in learning how to speak English, using speaking knowledge gained from the course in life, using course materials in speaking English, understanding and speaking English with the others, and looking for opportunities to talk to other people. The range of mean scores of five questions was from 3.27 to 3.80, being interpreted as the average to above average levels. As shown in Table 6, the average mean score for English-speaking motivation was 3.546. This means that students' English speaking motivation was at the above average level. Moreover, when considering each question item for English-speaking motivation, the highest mean score was the question item 5, which the participants highly rated that they would like to look for opportunities to speak English after learning through digital storytelling. This indicated that the students showed an interest in learning English by speaking outside class.

Analysis from interviews also revealed that their English-speaking motivation have been highly developed through using digital storytelling. First of all, among 10 randomly selected participants (namely from S1 to S10), 7 students (except for S2, S3, and S9) reported that when making the stories by themselves, looking for language functions, vocabulary and gathering all details into a story with meaning gave them a chance self-develop their own language and understand the language they use. In addition, ten of students also agreed that being exposed to English language both inside and outside class increased their English-speaking motivation. Furthermore, creating the stories based on their interest motivated them to speak English. This

is an important factor having good impact on their learning motivation.

Furthermore, 9 students (except for S8) stated that their way of learning English changed after learning through digital storytelling. Firstly, some of their groupmates who used to be very reluctant in learning English got involved much in creating stories and making videos, so they were more sociable. Secondly, together creating digital storytelling made the students enjoy their learning and this learning technique also inspired them to write more stories and use digital storytelling frequently as they would acquire the language from the stories in real life, which helped them develop their innate desire to study English language. They all showed that they were all proud of their products for each topic as they tried their best to make good videos with content to present to their friends. In short, all of them reaffirmed the benefits of digital storytelling for their motivation to learn English speaking.

Effectiveness of digital storytelling on students' level of English speaking confidence

Table 7

Findings from students' English-speaking confidence

		Confidence in being interviewed in English	Confidence in English-speaking discussion with native speakers	Confidence in giving opinion in English to the others	Confidence in understanding and speaking English to the others	Confidence in finding words/phrases for speaking topics in English	Willingness to speak English to a group of people
N	Valid	30	30	30	30	30	30
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean		3.37	3.73	3.47	3.73	3.40	3.53
Std. Deviation		1.159	.740	1.042	.980	.932	1.042
Minimum		1	2	1	2	1	2
Maximum		5	5	5	5	5	5

* Notes: - Five levels according to Likert-5-point scale were used to classify level of agreement of the questionnaire: 1 = Very Low, 2 = Below Average, 3 = Average, 4 = Above Average, and 5 = Very High

- The interpretation of mean scores of motivation and confidence were defined as follows: 1.00-1.50 = Very Low, 1.51-2.50 = Below Average, 2.51-3.50 = Average, 3.51-4.50 = Above Average, and 4.51-5.00 = Very High

As seen from Table 7, the student's confidence level was shown quite clearly in each question item. After using digital storytelling, most students also chose the average and above average levels when asked to assess their confidence in speaking English. Specifically, the average mean score of all question items was 3.538, considered the above average level. For confidence questions, the lowest recorded score (mean = 3.37) was in the confidence in answering interview questions in English and the highest one (mean = 3.73) was in the confidence in discussing in English with native speakers and more importantly understanding and speaking English to the others. The difference between the high and the low mean scores was 0.36 which was not too large. However, the results presented a significant correlation between English speaking skills and confidence when using digital storytelling (Murad & Assadi, 2023).

Data from interviews presented that digital storytelling was one of the students' favorite learning techniques because they were given a chance to learn the language through using authentic materials. All students indicated the most important thing was that they had

opportunities to create the digital videos through their own stories and experiences which make them much confident in creating and sharing their ideas. Especially, their stories have been created through different forms such as conversations, interviews, discussions, etc. also assisted them in applying the real language in real situations, so they are now quite confident in being interviewed by the other students or raising their voices in discussions in English. In addition, the teachers stored all digital videos made by students in a google drive link, so they could watch their own videos and classmates' again to improve their vocabulary and pronunciation. These students confirmed that their fear of speaking English gradually went down as they were not long nervous about making mistake or feeling shy when speaking in front of many people.

When being asked in details about which parts of making digital stories enhanced their English-speaking confidence, the students answered that when watching digital stories, the combination of pictures, audios, and videos in the stories made them perceive how to pronounce words and use sentences in our conversations properly. The students all confirmed that the audio recording was the most important part in improving the students' speaking competence and confidence. They clarified that they had to repeat their speaking until they thought that it was good enough to submit to the teacher, as a result they felt more confident to talk to their group members.

Discussion

The present study attempts to answer two questions about the effects of digital storytelling on Vietnamese first-year English majors' English-speaking ability and motivational and confidence levels.

The pre-and post-test findings revealed an increase in the students' English-speaking ability before and after applying digital storytelling. The positive result of using digital storytelling to boost students' speaking skills is in line with the findings from previous studies conducted by Robinni et al. (2019), and Razm. Doural, & Nozal (2014), and Malita and Martin (2010) as this technique has been proven to be effective in enhancing students' oral communication skills. As stated by Somedee and Suppasetserre (2012), students' speaking performance can be improved through digital storytelling as they can remember the series of scenes they created and enjoy telling stories using their own words and voices to practice speaking in the classroom. The preparation of speaking topics and guidance before making students work together is crucial. Moreover, the researchers concentrated on assisting the learners in presenting their digital stories with the Movie Adventure app. The use of digital storytelling apps, resulting in students' English speaking improvement, agrees with the statement by Reinders (2011) who argued that storytelling with the help of digital media would support students to visualize story scenes, construct story plots, and speak skills. In addition, this study's result also agrees with that of Rajab (2020), who indicated that speaking features such as vocabulary, grammar, fluency, accuracy, and comprehension have been improved through digital storytelling tools. However, the result of this study emphasizes the development of students' fluency and pronunciation, which are essential in making good communication.

The study also found that the use of digital storytelling in the speaking-learning process improved students' English-speaking confidence and motivation. The students showed their

motivational and confidence levels were at average and above average. Specifically, the students have been motivated to understand and speak English with the others, and they expected to find many opportunities to speak in English outside class. In terms of confidence, the participants stated that they had the above average level for discussing something in English with native speakers and their cheerfulness in learning and speaking English. These are consistent with those of Badawi et al. (2022), who found that creating stories in a positive environment and supportive classroom atmosphere increases the student's interest in learning English speaking. In addition, students' positive engagement and autonomy when sharing their stories foster their motivation to learn English. The findings of the study also further support statements done by Nair and Yunus (2022) that not only did digital storytelling engage students in their textbook's content, but also improved motivation and confidence in studying a foreign language. Since students are more confident and motivated to interact in English, their speaking skill is developed.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the findings of the study reaffirm the benefits of using digital storytelling in teaching and learning the speaking skills of EFL students. Particularly, when asking students to create digital stories, teachers can take advantage of them in guiding their learners to enhance their speaking skills and raising their students' desire to learn English speaking. The increase in pre- and post-test results points out the effectiveness of intervention tools in assisting students to learn speaking skills, especially in terms of pronunciation and fluency. Similarly, students' positive evaluation of their level of motivation and confidence has been shown to confirm that digital storytelling is used as an effective approach to enhance learners' engagement and enthusiasm in learning English speaking. However, the study is expected to do experimental research which makes a comparison of the effectiveness of using digital stories between different groups with more participants. In addition, this study only focused on first-year English majors, so it is essential to expand the participants of the study to second or third-year students of the same specialization or students of other majors, showing further findings for applying digital storytelling in teaching and learning English-speaking skills.

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