The Impact of Digital storytelling Approach on Enhancing the Saudi EFL grade Eight Students' listening Comprehension and Language Development

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Abstract

This study explored the effect of using digital storytelling approach to enhance the Saudi EFL middle school students' listening comprehension and language development. The 50 participants are grade 8 students in Mohammed Al-Jubair middle school, Al-Majmaah City. Twenty five participants were allocated to both groups: control and experimental. The control group studied storytelling activities by using the traditional lecture method, whereas the experimental group was taught by using digital storytelling activities derived from various Youtube videos. Data were collected by using the pretest and posttest research design. The test was constructed based on various listening comprehension tests. Data were analyzed using the mixed method of quantitative and qualitative analysis. The study employed paired samples T-Test and independent samples T-Test. The two T- Tests were conducted to compare the two groups' performance in the pretest and posttest and to verify the possible statistical and significant differences in the performances of both groups.   The study analyzed language errors made by both groups in the pre-and- posttests of listening comprehension and language development. The findings showed largely higher achievement in the experimental group's in posttest performance. It recommended incorporating digital storytelling approach into the Saudi middle school FL curricula.

Keywords*: digital storytelling approach, Saudi EFL grade 8 students, listening comprehension, language development, pedagogical implications.*

Introduction

Technology has a prominent role in the process of learning and teaching English as a foreign language. It has a broad effect in rendering help to the EFL teachers and learners. According to Sevy-Biloon and Chroman (2019) and Sherine, Sastry and Seshagiri (2020), technology has produced a number of tools to sustain the development of EFL learners' listening comprehension and language development skills such as *YouGlish*, *FORVO*, *digital storytelling*, etc. Nam (2017) and Tabieh, Al-Hileh, Abu Afifa and Abuzagha (2021) stated that listening comprehension is an important language skill that most EFL learners seek to develop. Listening comprehension combines the EFL learners' skills to fully comprehend the listening texts, respond fluently and coherently to the listening comprehension questions, use vocabulary and grammar properly, and achieve correct pronunciation.

Hamilton, Rubin, Tarrant and Gleason (2019) and Budianto, Minatul and Alam (2021) clarified that listening is an essential language skill because it affects the learning of other skills. It can improve speaking by providing EFL learners' with the needed phonological rules. It enriches the EFL learners' knowledge of vocabulary, so it can sustain their speaking, reading and writing skills. It provides them with knowledge of grammar rules so that they can improve their understanding of reading comprehensions, and polish their writing skills as well. However, Robin (2016) and Cremin, Flewitt, Swann, Faulkner, and Kucirkova (2018) explained that EFL learners always face problems while learning listening. Usually, EFL learners experience stress while listening to a FL listening text. They do not also keep focused throughout the listening text.   Listening provides useful learning inputs for EFL learners that can positively develop their FL knowledge. Listening also has entertaining

objective besides its academic objectives as it can refresh the EFL learners' minds.

In addition, Lisenbee and Ford (2018) and O'Byrne, Houser, Stone and White, (2018) explained that the innovative digital technology has efficiently affected the creation of learning materials. In this regard, *digital storytelling* can help EFL learners easily comprehend the listening texts and develop their language knowledge. Digital storytelling employs computers or other mobile devices for the purpose of conveying stories. It takes various forms such as audio recordings or audio-visual videos. Smeda, Dakich, and Sharda (2014) and Yamac and Ulusoy (2016) asserted that digital storytelling provides authentic listening materials that attract, motivate and actively engage EFL learners. Through *digital storytelling*, EFL learners can successfully comprehend and reflect on the listening comprehension.

Simsek (2020) and Barwasser, Bracht, and Grünke (2021) asserted the importance of employing *digital storytelling* approach in L2 and FL teaching and learning. This importance is attributed to the multi-facet effects emanate from listening to stories. *Digital storytelling* can positively affect the improvement of various linguistic aspects of younger L2 and FL learners. Digital storytelling provides authentic learning atmosphere which can stimulate learners' interest and motivation. *Digital storytelling* helps L2 and FL learners to spontaneously acquire vocabulary, create phonological awareness, increase fluency, and improve writing and reading skills. Rahiem (2021) explained that digital storytelling is an innovative approach that widens the students' learning opportunities and teachers' choices of innovative methods. It is not only viewed as a teaching approach, but as a learning source as well because it mingles the ability to telling a story with other components such as graphics, images, and music. *Digital storytelling* represents innovation in education that can be applied at various educational levels.

Basyoni, Bee and Seng (2020) called for doing more empirical studies to explore the usefulness of using *digital storytelling* approach to sustain critical listening skills not only in the Saudi EFL context but also in various EFL contexts. According to Ali, Shamsan, Guduru, and Yemmela (2019), both Saudi male and female EFL learners recognize the importance of developing English oral skills. However, they attributed the difficulty of being unable to improve their English oral skills to the unavailability of suitable learning environment and lack of motivation and interest. Furthermore, Al-Hassaani and Al-Saalmi (2022) explained that Saudi EFL learners encounter difficulties in developing oral English skills in terms of achieving full comprehension, fluency and coherence, proper usage of lexis and grammar, and production of proper pronunciation. Because of hesitation and repetition Saudi EFL learners could not realize full comprehension of listening texts, and fluency in speaking English. They found difficulty in maintaining coherence when speaking English. They are not flexible in receiving and conveying exact meaning because their listening comprehension and speaking skills are marked with the use of limited vocabulary. Consequently, it is deemed important to examine how effective is the utilization of the technological approach of *digital storytelling* in improving the listening comprehension skills and language development of Saudi EFL learners.

Definition of terms

Digital storytelling approach

The present study used the term digital storytelling approach in the sense of utilizing technology to employ the storytelling approach for the purpose of providing teaching instructions to grade 8 students who are learning English listening comprehension.

Listening comprehension

The study defined the term listening comprehension as one of the main English language skills that should be developed among grade 8 student.

Language development

This term was employed in the present study to refer to other interrelated language skills which are entwined with listening comprehension such as fluency, vocabulary, improving communication, proper pronunciation, speaking, and knowledge of English grammar rules.

Therefore, the list of listening skills that can be suitable for the research group may include:

1.Knowledge of English tenses.

2.Proper production of English vowels and consonants.

3.Fluency.

4.Enhancement of speaking skill.

5.Learning new vocabulary.

6.Understanding the spoken language.

Statement of the problem

Generally, Saudi EFL learners including those in the middle schools are in need for improving their listening comprehension skills and other language skills. Therefore, this study is mainly an exploration of the impact of using *digital storytelling* approach in enhancing the Saudi grade 8 EFL students' listening comprehension and language development. In other words, the current study discussed how effective is the utilization of *digital storytelling approach* to improve the participants' ability to fully comprehend listening texts and fluently, coherently, and properly respond to their questions. It also examined the effect of storytelling approach on improving their language skills development in terms of performance in grammar and writing skills.

Hypotheses

The present study attempted to verify the following null hypotheses:

1. There is not difference in the two groups' performance in the *listening comprehension* and language development pretest.

2. There is not difference in the control and experimental groups;s performance in the listening comprehension and language development post-test.

3. There is not statistically significant difference in the two groups' performance in the post-test.

4. *Digital storytelling* approach does not differ from the lecture method in improving the participants' listening comprehension skills and language development.

Questions

The current study tried to answer the following questions:

1. What types of performances do the Saudi control and experimental participants achieve in the listening comprehension and language development pretest?

2. What are the differences in the Saudi control and experimental participants' performances in the listening comprehension and language development post-test?

3. In terms of statistics, what are the significant differences marking the Saudi control and experimental participants' post-test performances?

4. How does *digital storytelling approach* contribute towards elevating the experimental participants' listening comprehension and language development?

Aims

The current study aimed to determine:

1. The performances of both groups in the listening comprehension and language development pretest.
2. Differences in the two groups' performances in the listening comprehension and language development post test.
3. The statistical and significant differences in both groups' posttest performances.
4. The impact of *digital storytelling* approach on enhancing the listening comprehension and language development of the experiment group.

Study significance

This study is significant since it:

- Is compatible with new trends of EFL teaching methods at the digital age of e-learning.
- Essentially serves the realization of Saudi ministry of education goals of FL teaching in middle schools.
- Helps to elevate the quality of FL teaching in Abdullah Al- Anqari middle school.
- Contributes to the enrichment of FL teaching literature in general and in the KSA in particular.

Delimitations

The expected findings of this study are limited to the impact of *digital storytelling* approach on enhancing the Saudi grade 8 students' listening comprehension and language development. The findings are also restricted to the TEFL process to grade 8 Saudi students in Mohammed Al-Jubair middle

school, Al-Majmaah City. It is hoped that the findings can also be useful to other Saudi middle schools.

Literature review

Bartan (2020) explored how various methods of storytelling can have different effects on pre-school children's comprehension and attention. Bartan divided the study into two phases. Initially at the first phase, Bartan employed the model of descriptive screening and attempted to determine which of the various methods of *storytelling* methods is mostly adopted by 72 pre-school teachers. Secondly, Bartan used the non-synchronized design to compare the usefulness of employing the four methods of *storytelling*. The second empirical phase was conducted with forty pre-school children aged 6 years old. In the empirical phase, Bartan introduced stories to the pre-school children by using different methods of *storytelling*. Bartan found that the most commonly used method of *storytelling* is book reading as teachers used to read a story from a book, and the least frequently used method is using a shadow puppet. In terms of realizing children's comprehension, Bartan asserted that reading from a book is most effective method of teaching *storytelling*. In terms of attracting children's attention, Bartan found that using *digital storytelling* is the most effective method for providing instruction. However, the method of story card does not positively affect the pre-school children's response to the *storytelling* approach.   Bartan clarified that the combination of audio-visual components in *storytelling* methods highly influences their effectiveness on pre-school children's comprehension and attention.

Basyoni, Bee and Seng (2020) examined the effect of utilizing digital storytelling on developing the critical listening skills of Saudi EFL grade 9 students in Riyadh city. Critical listening skills include the ability of auditory discrimination, analysis and inference. These skills refer to the ability of

examined Saudi participants to authenticity of information which they obtained from listening. Thus, this study is dissimilar to the study of Basyoni, et al. (2020) because it is not restricted to critical listening skills but rather covers a broad sense of listening which includes comprehension and response to the questions of listening comprehension text and the improvement of other language skills such as grammar and writing. Basyoni, et al. collected data by employing different instruments such as critical listening pretest and posttest, and critical listening checklist. Basyoni, et al. affirmed that the teaching and learning of English listening skills in the Saudi EFL context have not been totally uncovered as several studies neglect listening and focus instead on other skills. Basyoni, et al. emphasized the importance of using technological applications like digital stories telling in improving the critical listening skills of Saudi EFL grade 9 students. The researchers asserted the role of employing technological tools in comparison with the teaching traditional methods in developing the English communicative competence among Saudi students. According to Basyoni, et al., digital stories provide insights into the teaching and learning interaction with the Saudi EFL classroom. It develops students' participation within the classroom and creates a student-centered learning approach. Basyoni, et al. recommended that Saudi EFL teachers can utilize *digital storytelling* approach to plan their lessons on the basis of sustaining communicative language teaching. Basyoni, et al. found that *digital storytelling* approach helped developed the Saudi students' critical listening skills due to the authentic learning material embodied in the movies and episodes which they listened to and watched. Such materials also increased the participants' knowledge of English vocabulary and enhanced their conversational skills in a way which was reflected in developing their reading skills.

Rahiem (2021) conducted a qualitative study on the EFL teachers' views on employing *digital storytelling* for EFL teaching in Indonesia. Data were collected based on in-depth semi-structured interviews, analysis of documents and observation of *storytelling*-based activities. Four EFL teachers were interviewed on why *digital storytelling* should be adopted in FL teaching and learning. The researcher observed the employment of *digital storytelling* approach in two FL classes. The researcher observed which digital media teachers employed in teaching and the way EFL Indonesian students reacted to the *digital storytelling* activities. The researcher analyzed the students' recorded performance in the *digital storytelling* activities. Rahiem found that reasons behind employing *digital storytelling* approach are related to its effects on students' learning motivation, participation, language practice and communication development. Rahiem also reported that the EFL teachers used to employ simple and popular devices of digital technology that made students enjoy learning and eagerly participated in the *digital storytelling* activities. According to Rahiem, *digital storytelling* approach attracts students' attention and makes their engagement in performing those activities as fun and excitement. Rahiem called for providing further training for EFL teachers to increase their ability of using digital technology for pedagogical purposes. Rahiem also emphasized the necessity of equipping schools with modern technological devices need for employing *digital storytelling* approach. Rahiem recommended that FL curricula should be adjusted in a way that allows technology employment in teaching and learning English.

Ngoc and Hung (2022) examined the effectiveness of employing *storytelling approach* to develop grade 10 EFL Thai learners' listening comprehension skills. Data were collected by using listening comprehension pretest and post-test. In addition, pre and post attitude questionnaires towards the adopted teaching methods of listening comprehension (both traditional and

storytelling) were administered to the participants. Participants were divided into a control group and an experimental group. The control group studied listening comprehension by using a traditional method, while the experimental group studied listening comprehension by employing the storytelling approach. Ngoc and Hung reported that the experimental group achieved better improvement in their listening comprehension skills compared to those of the control group. Such improvement was mainly attributed to the employment of the *storytelling* approach vis-à-vis the traditional method. Ngoc and Hung clarified that the control and experimental groups stated that the traditional method was not as successfully effective method as the *storytelling* approach in developing listening comprehension skills. As for the experimental group's post-questionnaire of attitude towards using the *storytelling* approach, the experimental participants indicated that the *storytelling* approach helped them comprehend different details pertinent to the texts they listened to particularly the long listening texts. The *storytelling* approach also sustains their ability to determine the key words of the listening texts, learn new vocabulary and relieve their stress while listening. On the other hand, the control group expressed different opinions. For examples, they had difficulties in understanding the oral listening texts, and they could not recognize not only new words but also familiar words when they are uttered with different intonation patterns. The control group faced a challenge of keeping focused particularly with long listening texts.

Yuanisa (2022) explored the effect of using di*gital storytelling* approach on developing the grade 11 EFL Indonesian students' listening comprehension skills. Yuanisa adopted the pre-experimental research design and chose a purposive sample of 30 EFL participants. In other words, Yuanisa examined, pretested, and treated one single group of high school EFL students. After the pretest, the participants were provided with *digital storytelling* based

treatment by using videos of narrative stories. Data were elicited by using listening comprehension pretest and post-test. Yuanisa found that the participants' post-test scores were visibly higher that their pretest scores. The participants managed in the post-test to improve their listening comprehension skills concerning text structure and vocabulary. Yuanisa emphasized the effective role of utilizing *digital storytelling* approach in improving the participants' listening comprehension skills. Thus, the research rejected the null hypothesis about the ineffectiveness of *digital storytelling* in developing the participants' listening comprehension skills.

Method

Design of the study

This study employed methods of quantitative and qualitative analysis (Basyoni, et al. 2020, Wu and Chen, 2020, Barwasser, et al. 2021, Tabieh, et al. 2021, Yuanisa, 2022, and Marghany, 2023). In data quantification, the current study used descriptive statistics such as mean scores, standard deviation scores, and minimum and maximum scores of both groups' pretest and the post-test performances. The study tested the existence of statistical and significant differences in the pretest and post-test performances of both groups as well. For these reasons, the current study employed both *paired samples T-Test* and *independent samples T-Test*. In terms of the qualitative analysis, the present study analyzed the errors made by both groups in the pre-and posttests.

Participants

The participants are 50 grade 8 Saudi EFL students enrolled in Mohammed Al-Jubair middle school, Al-Majmaah City. Two control and experimental groups were created comprising 25 each. The participants are all males, their age ranges between 13-15, they belong to middle social class and only studied English in Saudi schools.

Procedure

The participants sat for a pretest and a post test of listening comprehension and language development during the second term of the school year 2022-2023. Each test was administered in one and a half hours. After the pretest, the participants were divided into a control group and an experimental group. The control group studied storytelling activities by using the traditional lecture method where the EFL teacher used to read the stories, whereas the experimental participants were taught by utilizing *digital storytelling* activities derived from various Youtube videos derived from https://www.teachervision.com/resources/8th-grade/storytelling. As for the two tests' validity, they were valid because they measured the participants' understanding of listening comprehension texts and language development. In terms of reliability, the two tests were separately piloted by using 20 participants and the pretest Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was .88 while that of the post-test was .90 in an indication of high reliability.

Data collection instruments

The five-part listening comprehension and language development pretest and post-test were constructed from different sources. Part one of each test is derived from *listening comprehension practice*   https://test-preparation.ca/listening-comprehension/ using two different texts. The participants listened to a listening comprehension text and asked to answer ten questions. Part two of both tests is constructed from *Grade 8 English Home Language Worksheet using two different listening comprehension passages* https://www.edupstairs.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Comprehension-test-Mention-of-Bus-Rapid-Transit.pdf. The participants were also asked to answer ten questions based on the listening comprehension texts which they heard. Part three of each test was derived from *Oxford English Listening Level Test* using two different dialogues https://www.oxfordonlineenglish.com/english-

level-test/listening. They answered ten questions based on the short dialogue which they listened to. Length of the six listening texts was observed as the first and third texts of each test were short while the second text of each test was a long listening text. The purpose was to test both examined groups' focus and attention while listening to different length texts. Part four of each test includes ten grammar questions covering the present and past simple tenses, possessive adjectives, possessive pronouns, and expressions of possession. Part five of each test is a writing task in which the participants were asked to write a paragraph on one of two topics. Parts four and five of each test were constructed by the researcher. Each part of both tests bears 10 marks as the total mark of each test is fifty marks.

Data analysis and results discussion

The employment of *paired samples T-Test* aimed to state whether the control group's performance had statistical and significant difference in the pretest and post-test. It also tested the statistical and significant differences which could possibly exist in the experimental group's performance both tests. In addition, the *independent samples T-Test* computed the gained mean scores of both groups. It also identified the statistical and significant differences which could possibly exist in both groups' post-test performances.

Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics of the *paired samples T-Test*. Both control and experimental groups had similarly performed the pretest of listening comprehension and language development as indicated in the mean score (13.58) and standard deviation (3.74) for the former and mean score (13.47) and standard deviation (3.32) for the latter. In addition, the control group's minimum and maximum scores ranged between 21-24 marks, whereas that of the experimental group ranged between 22-25 marks. The finding leads to the acceptance of the first null hypothesis that the control and experimental

groups do not differ in their performance in the listening comprehension and language development pretest.

Table 1

Pre-assessment results of students' listening comprehension performance

Groups	N	Mean	Standard. Deviation	Standard Error Mean	Minimum	Maximum
Post-test control score	**25**	**17.2731**	**4.04314**	**.55870**	**25**	**32**
Post-test experimental score	**25**	**43.4893**	**8.17202**	**.93821**	**29**	**48**
Pretest control score	**25**	**13.5831**	**3.74830**	**.33120**	**21**	**24**
Pretest experimental score	**25**	**13.4784**	**3.32071**	**.33647**	**22**	**25**

In addition, the post-test reveals improvements of the two examined groups' scores where the experimental groups' minimum and maximum score (29-48) were higher than that of the control group (25-32). In this regard, Table 2 shows the experimental group's mean score (43.48) was largely higher than that of the control group (17.27). The experimental group's listening comprehension skills and language development were largely enhanced vis-à-vis the control group' skills and language development. The experimental group's listening comprehension skills and language development were marked with higher variance vis-à-vis the control group' skills and language development as indicated in the former's higher standard deviation score (8.17)

compared to the control group' standard deviation (5.05). Table 2 also indicates that the control participants' performances in the pretest and post-test did not statistically differ. Meanwhile, there is statistically significant difference between the experimental group's performances in the pretest and post-test. Therefore, the present study rejects the second null hypothesis that the control and experimental groups do not differ in the listening comprehension and language development post-test.

Table 2

Pre-assessment results of students' listening comprehension performance

Test	M	Standard Deviation	N	DF	t-value	Sig.
Pretest control score	**13.5831**	**3.74830**	**25**	**24**	**2.104**	**.073**
Post-test control score	**17.2731**	**5.05314**	**25**	**24**		
Pretest experimental score	**13.4784**	**3.32071**	**25**	**24**	**22.865**	**.000**
Post-test experimental score	**43.4893**	**8.17202**	**25**	**24**		

Table 3 introduces the results of the *independent samples T-Test*. It shows the experimental participants had higher gained mean score (30.01) than that of the control group (3.69). It also indicates that the experimental group's listening comprehension skills and language development had statistical and significant difference from that of the control group. Thus, the current study does not accept the third null hypothesis that there are no statistically significant differences in the two groups' post-test performances. Consequently, the present study concludes that *digital storytelling* approach

was positively effective in enhancing the experimental group's listening comprehension skills and language development in comparison with the traditional method. Therefore, the present study does not also accept the fourth null hypothesis that *digital storytelling* approach and traditional method do not differ in affecting the listening comprehension skills and language development of EFL learners. These findings come in agreement with those reported by Bartan (2020), Basyoni, Bee and Seng (2020), Rahiem (2021), Ngoc and Hung (2022), and Yuanisa (2022).

Table 3

Post-assessment results of students' listening comprehension performance

Group	Gained Mean Score	Standard Deviation	N	DF	t-value	Sig.
Control	**3.69**	**1.30484**	**25**	**24**	**20.671**	**.000**
Experimental	**30.01**	**4.85131**	**25**	**24**		

As for qualitative analysis, the control and experimental participants roughly performed in the same way in the listening comprehension skills and language development pretest. Their similar low performance reflects making similar errors and the need for addressing such trouble spots. Their errors covered four levels: listening skills, speaking skills, grammar and writing skills. The errors of listening skills include inferring information, linking ideas, and determining the new vocabulary meaning. The speaking skills are mainly related to the pronunciation and phonetic production of back vowels, long vowels, diphthongs, triphthongs, different ways of pronouncing allomorphs, and production of consonants. The grammar errors include possessive adjectives and pronouns, expressions of possession, simple tenses. The writing skills include sentence structure and usage of vocabulary.

On the other hand, there was better improvement in the experimental group's post-test performance as they made a few errors vis-à-vis those the control group. At the listening skills level, they showed better mastery of inferring information, linking ideas and using new words. At the speaking level, they could differentiate between different types of vowels and various ways of pronouncing allomorphs. At the grammar level, they showed mastery of almost all taught grammar rules. They also showed mastery of writing skills in terms of sentence structure and usage of new words.

The experimental group's improved performance in listening comprehension skills and language development is essentially attributed to the employment of *digital storytelling* approach in Saudi EFL classrooms. *Digital storytelling* approach is a teaching method that provides entertainment, activities of emotion evoking, and audio-visual learning materials. Thus, the experimental group was likely to retain and develop the listening comprehension skills and other language skills which they studied by the means of this approach. As a brain-based approach, *digital storytelling* developed the experimental group's cognitive listening comprehension skills such as inference of new information, relating ideas to reach the exact meaning, and guessing meaning of new words. These cognitive skills were evident in the provided answers by the experimental group to the post-test performance. The experimental participants managed to provide relatively the correct answers of the five-part post-test. The experimental participants' development of cognitive listening comprehension skills was also evident in developing their knowledge of grammar rules such as the differentiation between possessive adjectives and pronouns, and simple tenses be it present or past. The development of cognitive listening comprehension skills was also reflected in part in the distinction between types of vowels, ways of producing allomorphs. It was also evidently shown in the comprehension of different

patterns of sentence structure and acquisition of new vocabulary as indicated in part five of paragraph writing. The advantages of audio-visual learning materials also sustained the development of the experimental group's cognitive listening comprehension skills. The facial expressions of nodding, gestures, and hinting made meaning clearer and helped the experimental participants to successfully guess the meanings of new words. These advantages also helped develop the experimental group's phonological skills, the ability to differentiate between sounds such as vowels and consonants.

Conclusion and pedagogical implications

The current study concludes that the control and experimental groups similarly performed in the listening comprehension and language development pretest. Their similar performance was marked by making common errors covering listening skills, speaking skills, grammar and writing skills. This finding led to the acceptance of first null hypothesis that there is no difference between the two examined groups' performances in the listening comprehension and language development pretest. On the other hand, the experimental group's listening comprehension skills and language development were highly improved in the post-test vis-à-vis the control group. The experiment participants were cognitively able to infer information, link ideas and use new words. They were also able to distinguish between various types of vowels and various ways of pronouncing allomorphs. They could also competently use almost all taught grammar rules. They also showed improved writing skills in terms of sentence structure and usage of new words. The findings led to the rejection of the second null hypothesis that the control and experimental groups do not differ in the listening comprehension and language development post-test. The findings also rejected the third null hypothesis that there are no statistically significant differences between the two examined groups' post-test performances. The experimental participants' better improved

post-test performance in listening comprehension and language development was essentially attributed to the employment of digital storytelling approach. Thus, the current study accepted the fourth null hypothesis that *digital storytelling* approach positively affected the experimental group's listening comprehension skills and language development. The findings are compatible in with those reported by Bartan (2020), Basyoni, Bee and Seng (2020), Rahiem (2021), Ngoc and Hung (2022), and Yuanisa (2022).

Therefore, the current study recommends the integration of digital storytelling approach into FL curricula planning for Saudi middle schools. The design of FL middle school curricula should exploit the advantages of *digital storytelling* approach in enhancing the cognitive skills necessary for developing the Saudi EFL grade 8 students' listening comprehension skills and language development. Thus, various *digital storytelling* based activities and tasks should be devised to develop Saudi EFL grade 8 students' ability to infer information, relate ideas o each other, and use new words. Such activities should also develop their speaking skills in terms of the ability to differentiate between vowels and consonants and produce allomorphs correctly. The selection of digital storytelling based learning materials should also observe the necessity of developing Saudi EFL grade 8 students' knowledge of English grammar rules and their writing skills in the sense of sentence structure and usage of new vocabulary. In addition, Saudi EFL teachers should be also trained on different techniques of employing *digital storytelling* in EFL classroom activities. Thus, student-teacher preparation and training programs should take into considerations ways of enhancing the Saudi EFL pre-service teachers' capabilities of positively utilizing the technology based digital storytelling approach for elevating the Saudi middle school students' listening comprehension skills and language development.

Recommendations

Below, the study introduced topics for future research:

1. A tentative study can examine effects of *digital storytelling* on developing the Saudi middle school students' reading comprehension skills.

2. A study may investigate the impact of *digital storytelling* on the motivation types which Saudi middle school students adopt when learning English whether integrative or instrumental.

3. A study can explore the Saudi middle school teachers' perception of employing digital storytelling in teaching English.

4. A study may examine the effect of using digital storytelling approach on FL curricula planning in the Saudi middle schools.

5. A study may discuss the effect of employing digital storytelling approach on the training and preparation programs of Saudi EFL student teachers.

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