

## **Students' Perception of Digital Storytelling to Improve Speaking Skill at an Indonesian Islamic Higher Education**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Digital storytelling is a method that combines the art of storytelling with digital media in various forms such as videos, images, text, and so on. Digital storytelling integrates technology into the classroom to facilitate the learning process. Especially in English language learning, this method supports the improvement of students' English language skills. This study aims to identify students' perceptions of digital storytelling to improve students' speaking skills at an Indonesian Islamic college. This mixed-method study involved 30 second-semester students at Datokarama State Islamic University in Palu. Quantitative data using questionnaires were analysed based on percentages while qualitative data in the form of interviews were analysed with three stages, namely, data reduction, display, and verification. Five aspects of perception are of concern in this study, namely attitude, motivation, interest, experience, and expectations. The research results from the five aspects prove that students have a positive perception of the use of digital storytelling in improving their speaking skills. Digital storytelling makes it easier for students to understand the material well, gives them confidence in interacting and cooperating in the classroom, and creates a fun learning process.

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## INTRODUCTION

English is the Lingua franca in the international world in various fields including academics. Therefore, in some countries positioning English as a second language but in Indonesia, English as a foreign language. Various efforts have been made by the government to optimize the mastery of English among the community. one of these efforts is by making English as one of the lessons available at the school level to universities. However, the level of mastery of English in Indonesia is still low<sup>1</sup>. There are several aspects that underlie this, one of which is the imbalance in the learning system in each aspect<sup>2</sup>. in learning English there are four main aspects that must be mastered, namely listening, speaking, reading and writing skills. these four things are carried out in harmony, but the fact is that this is not the case, reading and writing skills are often prioritized in classroom teaching compared to speaking and listening skills. In other words, English teaching often emphasizes theoretical mastery over practical.

Speaking is one of the most difficult aspects of language skills<sup>3</sup>. The ability to speak involves specific skills such as: the use of pronunciation, structure and vocabulary. Related to the teaching English as the foreign language, speaking can only be mastered through some steps. Most people, mastering the art of speaking is single most important aspect of learning a second or foreign language, and success is measured in terms of the ability to carry out a conversation in the language. Teachers use a variety of activities to get their students to speak in class<sup>4</sup>. It cannot be denied that speaking skill is very important to be mastered. Because when ones speak on a subject, it makes them active learners rather than passive receivers of information and it also helps them to absorb and to process information from the topic one speaks and will be involved deeply in the subject, to get a good sense.

Furthermore, one who wants to speak to others sometimes faces some troubles. He cannot produce his ideas, arguments, and feelings communicatively. One sometimes can understand what others say but he is not able to communicate it. This happens because of the lack of practice, low motivation, and less

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<sup>1</sup> Krisna Ariesta Nanda et al., "Pengaruh Metode Pembelajaran Flash Card Terhadap Keterampilan Berbicara Bahasa Inggris Pada Siswa Sekolah Dasar," *Jurnal RAP (Riset Aktual Psikologi Universitas Negeri Padang)* 11, no. 1 (2020): 25, <https://doi.org/10.24036/rapun.v11i1.107789>.

<sup>2</sup> Dzulkifli Isadaud, M.Dzikrul Fikri, and Muhammad Imam Bukhari, "The Urgency Of English In The Curriculum In Indonesia To Prepare Human Resources For Global Competitiveness," *DLAJAR: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Pembelajaran* 1, no. 1 (2022): 51–58, <https://doi.org/10.54259/diajar.v1i1.177>.

<sup>3</sup> L M Leong and S M Ahmadi, "AN ANALYSIS OF FACTORS INFLUENCING LEARNERS' ENGLISH SPEAKING SKILL," *International Journal of Research in English Education*, 2017, 34–41, <https://www.sid.ir/en/journal/ViewPaper.aspx?ID=520992>.

<sup>4</sup> Jeremy Harmer, *The Practice of English Language Teaching*, Fifth Edit (Slovakia: Pearson Education, 2015): 384.

communicative competence. Ideally, if what others express can be understood, one should also be able to produce it.

Speaking skills are the most important skills to master in learning a foreign language for various reasons, one of which is to facilitate communication with other people<sup>5</sup>. However, to master these speaking skills, it also needs to be supported by a more interesting learning strategy<sup>6</sup>, one of which is the use of digital storytelling. This learning strategy involves technology that can attract students' interest in learning English<sup>7</sup>. The students' interest can drive their purpose in learning speaking skills.

Digital media offers an incredible tool for storytelling<sup>8</sup>. Digital storytelling combines the art of storytelling with a mix of digital media, including text, images, recorded audio narration, music, and video<sup>9</sup>. Digital storytelling has also become a global phenomenon, with practitioners from all over the world creating digital stories to integrate technology into the classroom, support language learning, facilitate discussions, increase social presence, and more<sup>10</sup>. The use of technology in teaching and learning practice should be supported by students and teachers. The students face challenges and struggle to recognize the use of technology platforms to acquire information needed to master other concepts<sup>11</sup>. Digital storytelling is designed to tell meaningful stories and uses media as a tool to amplify those stories.

Digital storytelling as one of the important methods in creating an effective learning environment is beneficial to the development of education. Learning English using digital storytelling not only teaches students language skills but also digital skills<sup>12</sup>. Digital storytelling can also be implemented both in the

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<sup>5</sup> Srinivas Rao, P, "The Importance of Speaking Skills in English Classrooms," *Alford Council of International English & Literature Journal* 2, no. 2 (2019): 6–18, [www.acielj.com](http://www.acielj.com).

<sup>6</sup> Situjuh Nazara, "Students' Perception on EFL Speaking Skill Development," *JET (Journal of English Teaching)* 1, no. 1 (2011): 29–43, <http://ejournal.uki.ac.id/index.php/jet/article/view/50>.

<sup>7</sup> Juliana Juliana, "The Role of Technology in Innovating English Teaching to Improve Learning Outcomes in the Digital World," *International Journal of Linguistics, Literature and Culture* 8, no. 4 (2022): 111–22, <https://doi.org/10.21744/ijllc.v8n4.2095>.

<sup>8</sup> Hilary McLellan, "Storytelling in Higher Education," *Diversity in Higher Education* 19, no. 1 (2016): 177–82, <https://doi.org/10.1108/S1479-364420160000019009>.

<sup>9</sup> Bernard R Robin and Sara G McNeil, "Digital Storytelling," in *The International Encyclopedia of Media Literacy*, 2019, <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118978238.ieml0056>.

<sup>10</sup> Chang Woo Nam, "The Effects of Digital Storytelling on Student Achievement, Social Presence, and Attitude in Online Collaborative Learning Environments," *Interactive Learning Environments* 25, no. 3 (2017): 412–27, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10494820.2015.1135173>.

<sup>11</sup> Leonard C Manuel, "THE EFFECT OF TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES ON COLLEGE SOPHOMORES'READING HABITS IN ILOCOS SUR POLYTECHNIC STATE COLLEGE PHILIPPINES," *Jurnal Pendidikan* 11, no. 1 (2022).

<sup>12</sup> Kevser Hava, "Exploring the Role of Digital Storytelling in Student Motivation and Satisfaction in EFL Education," *Computer Assisted Language Learning* 34, no. 7 (2021): 958–78, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09588221.2019.1650071>.

classroom and outside the classroom<sup>13</sup>. Moreover, the advantage of learning English through digital storytelling is that it facilitates the learning process both offline and online<sup>14</sup>. The content of learning materials can be presented in both online and offline forms<sup>15</sup>. Even digital storytelling can be used as a useful tool by educators in improving the speaking skills of students from various levels of education, ranging from primary to higher education<sup>16</sup>. Technology-integrated English learning could be implemented in all various level of education and applied in blended learning.

Digital storytelling can motivate students and create a good atmosphere in the classroom<sup>17</sup>. Previous researches have shown that digital storytelling can create an active and fun classroom atmosphere. Therefore, Digital storytelling also actively involves students in the learning process<sup>18</sup>. Other studies show that digital storytelling in the classroom is very useful in helping students communicate and speak more effectively<sup>19</sup>. As well as, Students' interest in learning English using digital storytelling is very high because the learning process becomes more fun,

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<sup>13</sup> Juan Arroba and Hazel Acosta, "Authentic Digital Storytelling as Alternative Teaching Strategy to Develop Speaking Skills in Efl Classes," *LEARN Journal: Language Education and Acquisition Research Network* 14, no. 1 (2021): 317–43.

<sup>14</sup> Robiatul Munajah, Mohammad Syarif Sumantri, and Yufiarti Yufiarti, "The Use of Digital Storytelling to Improve Students' Writing Skills," *Advances in Mobile Learning Educational Research* 3, no. 1 (2022): 579–85, <https://doi.org/10.25082/amler.2023.01.006>.

<sup>15</sup> Mehrak Rahimi and Samaneh Yadollahi, "Effects of Offline vs. Online Digital Storytelling on the Development of EFL Learners' Literacy Skills," *Cogent Education* 4, no. 1 (2017), <https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2017.1285531>.

<sup>16</sup> Viknesh Nair and Melor Md Yunus, "A Systematic Review of Digital Storytelling in Improving Speaking Skills," *Sustainability*, 2021, 1–15.

<sup>17</sup> Imam Sudarmaji, Agus Mulyana, and Karsiyah Karsiyah, "Applying Digital Storytelling To Improve Indonesian High School Students' Visual Memory and Writing Skill," *English Review: Journal of English Education* 8, no. 2 (2020): 91, <https://doi.org/10.25134/erjee.v8i2.2987>; Yee Bee Choo, Tina Abdullah, and Abdullah Mohd Nawi, "Digital Storytelling vs. Oral Storytelling: An Analysis of the Art of Telling Stories Now and Then," *Universal Journal of Educational Research* 8, no. 5 A (2020): 46–50, <https://doi.org/10.13189/ujer.2020.081907>; Abdorreza Tahriri, Maryam Danaye Tous, and Solmaz Movahedfar, "The Impact of Digital Storytelling on Efl Learners' Oracy Skills and Motivation," *International Journal of Applied Linguistics and English Literature* 4, no. 3 (2015): 144–53, <https://doi.org/10.7575/aiac.ijale.v.4n.3p.144>; Shahala Nassim, "Digital Storytelling: An Active Learning Tool for Improving Students' Language Skills," *International Journal of Teaching, Education and Learning* 2, no. 1 (2018): 14–29, <https://dx.doi.org/10.20319/pijtel.2018.21.1429>.

<sup>18</sup> Desty Laura Br Sembiring and Debora Chaterin Simajuntak, "Digital Storytelling as an Alternative Teaching Technique to Develop Vocabulary Knowledge of EFL Learners," *Journal of Languages and Language Teaching* 11, no. 2 (2023): 211, <https://doi.org/10.33394/jollt.v11i2.7523>; Emily Kallinikou and Iolie Nicolaidou, "Digital Storytelling to Enhance Adults' Speaking Skills in Learning Foreign Languages: A Case Study," *Multimodal Technologies and Interaction* 3, no. 3 (2019), <https://doi.org/10.3390/mti3030059>.

<sup>19</sup> Syafryadin Syafryadin et al., "Digital Storytelling Implementation for Enhancing Students' Speaking Ability in Various Text Genres," *International Journal of Recent Technology and Engineering (IJRT)* 8, no. 4 (2020): 3147–51; Nair and Yunus, "A Systematic Review of Digital Storytelling in Improving Speaking Skills."

interactive and makes it easier for them to understand a story<sup>20</sup>. Even digital storytelling also has a positive effect on improving students' writing skills<sup>21</sup>.

In all these studies, it has been shown that the use of digital storytelling can be implemented at every level from primary, secondary, and higher education. The use of digital storytelling is also often used in the learning process. These studies recommend further research related to digital storytelling in education. However, there is still very little research on digital storytelling related to students' perceptions. Therefore, the researcher intends to conduct a study on students' perceptions of digital storytelling in improving students' speaking skills at an Indonesian Islamic Higher Education.

### Methods

This study aims to obtain detail description about the perception of the students that have studied English using digital storytelling to improve their speaking skills at UIN Datokarama Palu. This study used an explanatory mixed methods design to collect quantitative and qualitative data<sup>22</sup>. The respondents of this study were 30 students who were purposively selected from second-semester students of the Faculty of Ushuluddin, Adab, and Da'wah UIN Datokarama Palu. The reason for purposive sampling is that the second-semester students have similar English proficiency. Data collection was conducted using questionnaires and semi-structured interviews to support the quantitative findings. The data analysis of questionnaires used Likert Scale and then analyzed in percentage to know the perception of students in learning English through digital storytelling. Meanwhile, the qualitative data analysis technique used in this research using the Milles and Huberman model which goes through three stages of data reduction research, display and verification<sup>23</sup>.

### RESULTS

The questionnaire that has been distributed through Google Forms has been answered by 30 respondents. The 10 question items given are related to student perceptions of the use of digital storytelling in improving speaking skills which are divided into five aspects namely attitude, motivation, interest, experience, and expectation.

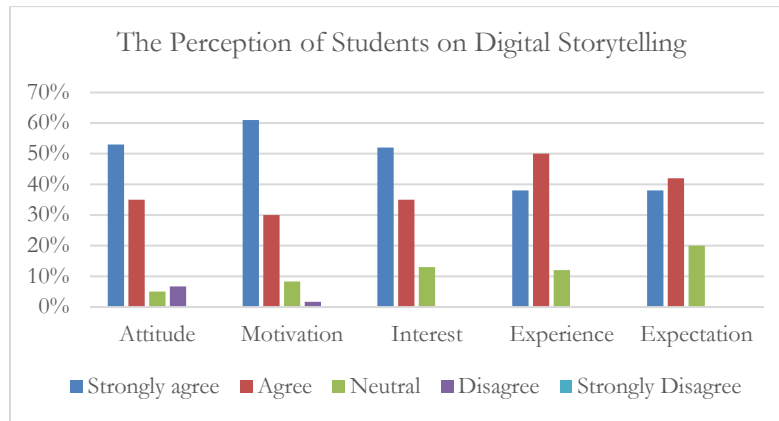
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<sup>20</sup> Wan Izzati W Ahmad and Hamidah Yamat, "Students' Perception on Learning English Language through Conventional and Digital Storytelling," *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences* 10, no. 2 (2020): 484–504, <https://doi.org/10.6007/ijarbss/v10-i2/6945>.

<sup>21</sup> Fatih Tanrikulu, "Students' Perceptions about the Effects of Collaborative Digital Storytelling on Writing Skills," *Computer Assisted Language Learning* 35, no. 5–6 (2022): 1090–1105, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09588221.2020.1774611>.

<sup>22</sup> John W. Creswell, *Educational Research; Planning, Conducting and Evaluating Quantitative and Qualitative Research*, Fourth Edi (Pearson, 2012).

<sup>23</sup> Matthew B Miles, A. Michael Huberman, and Johnny Saldana, *Qualitative Data Analysis*, Edition 3 (United States of America: Sage Publication, Inc., 2014).



**Figure 1. The Perception of Students on Digital Storytelling to Improve Speaking Skill**

Figure 1 above shows that students have a high perception of the use of digital storytelling to improve their speaking skills. The average result on the attitude aspect shows that there are 53% of students strongly agree that the use of digital storytelling makes it easier for them to understand the material and pay more attention during the learning process. On the motivation aspect, most students (61%) strongly agreed that through this method they became more confident in speaking English in the classroom. There 52% of students strongly agreed that digital storytelling increased their interest in learning English and more actively participated during the learning process. After experiencing learning using digital storytelling, there are 50% of students agree that this method helps them in learning English, especially in improving their speaking skills while teaching them some media or technology that makes it easier to learn English. While in terms of expectation, approximately 42% of students hope to follow the learning process with this method again not only in the classroom but also outside the classroom.

While the data from interviews with students also responded very positively to English learning using the digital storytelling method in improving their speaking skills. this can be seen in the following table.

**Table 1. Improvement of speaking skills through Digital Storytelling experienced by students**

Exemplary descriptions	Coding
<i>I am happy to learn English with the digital storytelling method because at first, I thought English was difficult but, this is fun, there are many kinds of material provided with pictures in the form of videos that attract attention when learning so that it is easy to understand.</i>	Interest, attitude
<i>I used to listen more when learning English, but not anymore because from the stories displayed with the media I can understand more and feel confident to discuss in class and even argue because sometimes some agree with us and some do not.</i>	Motivation
<i>Learning with the digital storytelling method in the class, we practice speaking more often than we usually read or learn tenses. So, it is very helpful for me in learning to speak English, moreover, if for example, English is learned outside like this, I would like to join again.</i>	Experience, Expectation

Overall, students had a positive perception of the use of the digital storytelling method in improving their speaking skills. In previous research, the students focused on talking about the positive aspects of this method. Students argued that their speaking skills improved because the teaching method was very active and varied. In addition, the teaching media in the form of pictures and videos further attracted students' interest in learning and provided a lot of opportunities for them to discuss during the learning process. The students also thought that the digital storytelling method increased their confidence in speaking English. Apart from the positive effect on learning, students also mentioned that this method not only teaches language but also recognizes and knows various media or technology that can support a fun learning process. Even the digital storytelling method can be applied outside the classroom.

## DISCUSSION

This article offers students' perceptions on the use of digital storytelling to improve their speaking skills. From the results of these perceptions, the researcher found that the use of digital storytelling is related to the improvement of students' speaking skills. These results are consistent with claims that the digital storytelling method creates a good atmosphere in the classroom and improves students' English skills. This may be because the digital storytelling method provides many opportunities for students to actively participate in the learning process so that they can speak more and this technology-based learning creates an interesting and fun learning atmosphere and motivates students to learn.

The results of attitude aspects where students who learn with this method very easy to understand each story from the material presented in a structured manner with interesting images and videos to attract their attention to pay more attention to the lesson carefully. Several previous studies have proven that the

digital storytelling technique can create a good and conducive classroom atmosphere where students focus and concentrate when the teacher teaches with this technique<sup>24</sup>. The involvement of digital tools in the teaching and learning speaking skills made the students enthusiastic.

The motivation aspect of this study showed that students are motivated to learn English better and more confident in speaking in the classroom to convey their feeling and thought<sup>25</sup>. Motivation in learning speaking skills is one aspect that plays a very important role; therefore, the lecturer must be able to create an interested materials to engage the students. Previous research on digital storytelling also shows that students feel confident in learning English and can improve students' English skills<sup>26</sup>. Digital storytelling approach had a positive impact on students' language performance and contributed to an increase in students' motivation<sup>27</sup>.

Students' interest in learning English is also proven in this study where students are actively involved in the learning process with digital storytelling so that there is good collaboration among students in learning. Meanwhile, some studies also show that students enjoy learning English through digital storytelling so they actively participate in the learning process<sup>28</sup>. Thus, there is good interaction in the classroom both among students and students with teachers. Another research proves that digital storytelling provides wide opportunities for students to practice their speaking skills and even learn some media that can be used in presenting learning materials<sup>29</sup>. It is often easier to understand a story being told than one which is read aloud because, storytelling gives motivation, meaning, fluency, language awareness, and stimulus for the students speaking<sup>30</sup>.

The application of Digital Storytelling applies all learning theories where students construct their knowledge through practice and experience by working together with their peer group members to produce socially relevant work<sup>31</sup>. In

<sup>24</sup> Sudarmaji, Mulyana, and Karsiyah, "Applying Digital Storytelling To Improve Indonesian High School Students' Visual Memory and Writing Skill."

<sup>25</sup> Nair and Yunus, "A Systematic Review of Digital Storytelling in Improving Speaking Skills."

<sup>26</sup> Aysegül Okumuş, "The Perceptions and Preferences of 8th Grade Students in Digital Storytelling in English," *International Online Journal of Education and Teaching (IOJET)* 7, no. 2 (2020): 585–604, <http://iojet.org/index.php/IOJET/article/view/654>.

<sup>27</sup> Kuo-Ping Liu, Shu-Ju Diana Tai, and Chen-Chung Liu, "Enhancing Language Learning through Creation: The Effect of Digital Storytelling on Student Learning Motivation and Performance in a School English Course," *Educational Technology Research and Development* 66 (2018): 913–35.

<sup>28</sup> Nam, "The Effects of Digital Storytelling on Student Achievement, Social Presence, and Attitude in Online Collaborative Learning Environments."

<sup>29</sup> Hava, "Exploring the Role of Digital Storytelling in Student Motivation and Satisfaction in EFL Education"; Hanadi S Mirza, "Improving University Students' English Proficiency," *International Online Journal of Education and Teaching* 7, no. 1 (2020): 84–94.

<sup>30</sup> Anik Indramawan and Dr Akhyak, "Improving the Students' English Speaking Competence through Storytelling (Study in Pangeran Diponegoro Islamic College (STAI) of Nganjuk, East Java, Indonesia)," *International Journal of Language and Literature* 1, no. 2 (2013): 18–24.

<sup>31</sup> Nassim, "Digital Storytelling: An Active Learning Tool for Improving Students' Language Skills."



the aspect of the experience, this research shows that students have a positive learning experience to learn English and also some media that can be used in presenting material in the form of videos and serialized images<sup>32</sup>. From previous research, it is proven that students who learn English with digital storytelling hope to participate again in the learning process with this method<sup>33</sup>. Even the aspect of expectation in this study also strengthens the evidence in the previous research. Some studies also reveal that the digital storytelling method is not only suitable for offline classes but also for online classes.

The findings of this study have several important implications. Digital storytelling has previously been discussed as an alternative approach that can create a more enjoyable learning atmosphere and improve students' language skills, especially speaking skills, and can be applied inside and outside the classroom.

## CONCLUSION

It turns out from the results of research on student perceptions of the use of digital storytelling in improving speaking skills show a high perception. The findings presented show that in the learning process through digital storytelling there is interaction and collaboration that can improve students' speaking skills. The findings of this study have additional implications for teachers as learning material designers where in presenting digital storytelling material should be tailored to the needs of learners not general material so that the material will be more attractive to students. The limitation of this study is related to the small sample size which reduces the strength of these findings to explore more deeply the digital storytelling method related to improving students' speaking skills.

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<sup>32</sup> Danielle Yocom et al., "Perceptions of Digital Storytelling in the Classroom," *Teaching and Learning in Nursing* 15, no. 3 (2020): 164–67, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.teln.2020.01.010>.

<sup>33</sup> Yocom et al.; Arroba and Acosta, "Authentic Digital Storytelling as Alternative Teaching Strategy to Develop Speaking Skills in Efl Classes."

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