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The Efficacy of Digital Stories in Enhancing Listening Skills within the Context of an Arabic Language Course for Sixth-Grade Students in Dumat Al-Jandal in Saudi Arabia

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Abstract. In language learning, listening is considered an essential skill. However, traditional teaching approaches are still in use, which do not always positively impact students or develop their listening skills. Novel strategies are being developed to improve language skills, as traditional methods are often inadequate to cater to the needs of different age groups. Recently, digital stories that combine visual, audio, and narrative elements are commonly used to help create a more interactive and stimulating learning experience. The aim of this study is to investigate the impact of digital storytelling (DST) on enhancing listening skills among sixth-grade students in an Arabic language course in Dumat Al-Jandal, Saudi Arabia. A quantitative quasi-experimental design was followed, consisting of 60 male students who took part in the study and were divided randomly into experimental (30) and control (30) groups. Digital stories were used to teach the treatment group, whereas the traditional approach was employed for the control group. A multiple-choice listening skills test was created to evaluate the students' attainment. Statistical analysis was conducted using the Wilcoxon test, which indicated a significant difference ($p < 0.05$) between post-test scores between the control and experimental groups. Results reveal that students exposed to the DST approach outperformed the students in the control group in the post-test. Thus, it can be concluded that the DST approach is highly effective in enhancing students' listening abilities in the context of an Arabic language course. This offers important implications for educators and those involved in curriculum development.

Keywords: Arabic language; digital storytelling; language course; listening skills; Saudi Arabia

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1. Introduction

Language skills are essential tools of communication and cognition as they are used not only to exchange ideas but also to build a foundation of identity and belonging. One cannot express one's own ideas without first listening, understanding, and integrating information with one's existing knowledge. Learning a language comprises four foundational language skills: speaking, reading, listening, and writing. However, among these skills, listening has often been neglected. Overlooked and undervalued, listening has been described as the "Cinderella skill" of language teaching, with many people assuming that knowing a language means only being able to speak and write in it (Nunan, 2001).

Like any other language skill, listening is an important skill to develop and, indeed, was the primary method of language acquisition before the advent of writing (Ghanayem & Al-khawaldeh, 2025). Listening is essential as it enables students to enrich their vocabulary, improve their language usage, and achieve better language fluency. Moreover, it is considered the basis for other skills development because it is the primary medium through which students can interact and communicate directly with the target language and its related culture (Omoush & Alslaiti, 2022).

Listening is an active process that requires real-time comprehension of the language delivered with varying speeds and diverse accents (Axrorova, 2025). People engage in listening in several ways, depending on the purpose. Also, listening abilities vary among listeners according to the situation. For language learners to express their thoughts and comprehend sound units, speeches, conversations, and audio representations, they need to rely on their listening skills. Thus, it is commonly believed that providing students with various opportunities for listening practice allows them to develop more effective listening strategies (Yurko & Styfanyshyn, 2020). Effective listening engages students and allows them to comprehend the spoken language, thereby establishing the basis for communication with native speakers and contributing significantly to their overall language production (Askarovna & Sharifovna, 2025).

In the Arabic setting, the Arabic language holds a very significant place in Islamic education, as it encompasses the understanding of such sacred texts as the Qur'an and Hadith, and broadens the arena of Islamic sciences. Moreover, ancient Arabs relied heavily on oral traditions to transmit their knowledge and sciences, with poetry, tales, and chronicles of the Arabs being passed down orally from one generation to another, thereby contributing to the preservation of Arab heritage and enhancing language skills among recipients (Wahba et al., 2014).

However, in modern times, learning Arabic is hindered by several challenges, such as minimal learning interest from students, limited available learning resources, and a lack of teaching materials that are innovatively designed to meet students' needs (Afril et al., 2024). Hence, the development of Arabic language teaching materials based on language skills is essential in order to improve students' skills in the areas of speaking, listening, writing, and reading. Materials developed with a language skill-based approach will enhance students'

attainment of functional proficiency in Arabic, except for an in-depth understanding of grammar. In addition, this would provide students with experience in using Arabic meaningfully. This aligns with prior research, which indicates that Arabic language learning should focus on mastering competencies that are significant for practical purposes related to communication needs (Brown & Lee, 2015).

Rapid technological advances have changed the educational landscape since the start of the 21st century. These evolving breakthroughs allow students to access information while equipping them with technology. Teachers' integrated technology-supported approaches provide an important tool to fulfill the needs of the current educational landscape (Tamimi et al., 2024). By employing technological tools, learning has shifted from traditional methods to modern approaches. Videos, audio devices, simulations, and animations have been used to address multiple learning preferences and enhance the listening skills of Saudi students (Wicaksana, 2023). Listening skills can be improved with the help of various technology-enhanced approaches, thereby offering opportunities for language growth. Among them, the most effective strategy is storytelling, which has been shown to have a positive impact on both students and adults.

Moreover, this strategy helps in the development of listening comprehension skills as it equips learners' imagination, expressions, terminologies, and vocabulary (Sickles, 2012). With the availability of technological tools, digital storytelling (DST) has emerged as a beneficial product for constructing a healthy communicative environment in language classrooms (Eissa, 2019). Indeed, the importance of using digital stories in advancing students' listening skills becomes evident, as it combines the power of narratives with the enjoyment of multimedia, thereby enhancing the quality of linguistic learning. When implemented accurately, this approach is particularly effective and improves digital literacy. Numerous studies have revealed the benefits of digital storytelling for achieving greatly improved language skills.

1.1 Research Gap

Elementary school students encounter difficulties in developing listening skills within the Arabic language curriculum when traditional teaching methods are employed. Such methods often consist of listening to recorded texts or reading texts in a monotonous manner, without integrating auditory and visual elements that facilitate understanding and enhance language skills. Despite the central role of listening in learning the Arabic language, many current educational approaches may prove inadequate in capturing students' attention or fostering their engagement (Rosyad et al., 2023).

Therefore, the implementation of digital storytelling becomes essential as an innovative learning tool, which combines both auditory and visual narration. This approach has the potential to construct an engaging learning environment that aids the learners in understanding and assimilating content more effectively. Previous studies have described the potential advantages of using digital storytelling in language classrooms, particularly for English language learning or

for English as a foreign language (EFL) learner. However, there remains a notable deficiency in studies investigating the impact of digital storytelling on improving the listening skills of elementary school students, particularly within the context of the Arabic language curriculum. Therefore, the current study seeks to address this gap by evaluating the effectiveness of digital storytelling in improving the listening skills of students in Grade six, living in Dumat Al-Jandal city, Saudi Arabia, within an Arabic language course.

1.2 Research Question

This study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of digital storytelling in enhancing the listening skills of sixth-grade students enrolled in an Arabic language course. In addition, it seeks to measure the influence of implementing this modern technique on motivating students and enhancing their listening abilities. Thus, the following research question was formulated: *How effective is digital storytelling in enhancing listening skills within the context of an Arabic Language course for sixth-grade students in Dumat Al-Jandal in Saudi Arabia?*

2. Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Framework: Constructivist Learning and Using Digital Stories

The term 'constructivism' originated from a Latin word meaning 'to build together.' Constructivist learning is based on an educational theory developed by Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky, emphasizing students' active involvement in the process of learning. This theory posits that knowledge is constructed through interaction with the environment and available resources (Piaget, 1953; Vygotsky, 1978). According to this perspective, an active learning process enables learners to engage in inquiry and exploration, allowing them to construct meaning individually and collectively through their interactions with the surrounding environment. Learning happens through experiences and interactions. Piaget's theory is based on cognitive constructivism, highlighting the importance of personal experiences which are useful for learning.

Prior knowledge influences the understanding of new learning experiences as learners understand the world based on their personal beliefs and experiences (Gash, 2014). Meanwhile, Vygotsky's theory is grounded in social constructivism, which views learning as a social process that allows students to build their understanding through interactions with knowledge sources. Social constructivism posits that human understanding, significance, and meaning arise through collaboration with others. Learning is therefore shaped by the multiple social and cultural factors that influence the student. According to Gray (1997), constructivist classrooms allow students to become involved in an equal and active manner that promotes learning.

Digital stories represent an appropriate educational tool to facilitate active interaction, as they blend written texts with audio and visual content, thereby creating an interactive learning environment. Typically, digital stories incorporate multimedia elements, including still images, animations, and video clips, with the layering of audio commentary and music. Furthermore, digital stories create an environment that encourages the learner's enthusiasm and curiosity to interact realistically with the educational material, which can appeal to their senses and

encourage them to engage with it. Many studies have confirmed the notable impact of digital storytelling in the educational process, as it promotes creativity and imagination. For example, a study by Tabieh et al. (2021) reported that digital stories support active listening and encourage learners to attain a thorough understanding of the content through their engagement with auditory and visual texts. Furthermore, research by Çetin Köroglu (2020) demonstrated that listening skills are significantly enhanced by digital stories, as they encourage students to share ideas and discuss the content they have heard. In addition, they allow students to familiarize themselves with each other's cultures.

2.2 Literature Review

Digital storytelling successfully grabs the attention of children by presenting interactive topics, sharpening their focus on activities, and assisting in making learning immersive and enjoyable. Previous studies have significantly highlighted the efficacy of digital storytelling, particularly for enhancing listening skills. For instance, Demirbaş and Şahin (2022) found that digital stories have a positive impact on grade-four students' listening skills. Similarly, a Jordan-based study investigated the impact of oral and digital storytelling approaches on strengthening students' critical listening capabilities. Results showed that this approach increased the curiosity and motivation of the students, thereby promoting a positive increase in performance (Omoush & Alslaiti, 2022).

In addition, Basyoni et al. (2022) recommended that digital storytelling should be incorporated into language classrooms on the basis that it notably improves the critical listening capabilities of students in terms of evaluation, judgment, analysis, and inference skills. Furthermore, an Indonesian study demonstrated that, through the assistance of digital storytelling, listening activities were deemed more fun and enjoyable and better scores were achieved weekly by seventh-grade students (Fakhrudin et al., 2024).

Oral storytelling is an ancient tradition firmly rooted in the Arab culture. The art of storytelling has been passed on from one generation to the next and remains the primary means of cultural expression in Arabia (Herzog, 2012). As a literacy tool, it creates a connection between the experiences of the child and the content. Furthermore, traditional storytelling relies heavily on the usage of foundational language skills: reading, writing, speaking, and listening. It enhances emotional bonding, memory retention, imagination, and creativity (Lisenbee & Ford, 2018).

This traditional method mostly depends on narration by the teacher or active performance such as puppet shows. However, the emergence of innovative technologies has changed the form and structure of storytelling, giving rise to the new phenomenon of digital literacy. Comparative studies between traditional storytelling and DST further underscore the undeniable potential of DST. According to Hamdy (2017), students who were taught through DST outperformed the control group, improving both their reading and comprehension skills. Digital storytelling is a cutting-edge method that promotes personalized learning using digital tools infused with the time-honored craft of storytelling. Specifically, many studies in Arabia have recently evaluated the

impact of DST on learners, noting that students' involvement and engagement have greatly increased due to the incorporation of DST, thus revitalizing traditional storytelling (Afril et al., 2024).

One Saudi Arabian study revealed that the incorporation of digital tools not only improved the listening abilities of EFL students but also reduced their language anxiety (Al-Mohawes, 2023). Many Arabic studies have focused on the effectiveness of DST in the EFL context. According to Al-Amri (2020), DST has been shown to be favorable for EFL learners by improving students' phonology, grammar, and lexicon. Moreover, Bensaadi (2024) discovered that the use of DST in EFL aids in vocabulary retention and the implementation of language skills in real-world scenarios. By captivating students' attention, DST approaches allow students to participate in an immersive and engaging learning experience.

However, numerous challenges are associated with implementing DST in classrooms. For example, a lack of appropriate training and developmental opportunities for teachers raises significant concerns regarding DST incorporation. In addition, the limited availability of the necessary infrastructure and insufficient access to cutting-edge technology hinder the effectiveness of DST implementation (Yigit, 2020). Challenges such as copyright problems, disparities in the digital literacy skills of student cohorts and time restrictions further exacerbate this issue.

While the existing literature has evaluated the use of DST in language classrooms, the majority of the research to date has predominantly focused on EFL or other language learners. Some studies have showcased the efficacy of DST in improving the speaking and writing skills of non-Arabic speakers. Few studies have closely examined how DST enhances listening comprehension in Arabic as a foreign language and its effectiveness in comparison to the traditional practices in Arabic classroom experiences. Thus, a significant gap remains in the current literature regarding the implementation of DST to enhance listening skills within the setting of an Arabic language course.

Therefore, there is a growing need for detailed and thorough research regarding the implementation of DST in the context of Arabic language learning. This study attempts to bridge this gap by evaluating the effectiveness of digital storytelling in enhancing the listening skills of sixth-grade students studying the Arabic language in the context of Saudi Arabia.

3. Methodology

3.1 Study Design

A quantitative quasi-experimental design was followed. It was specifically designed to compare two groups: the control and the experimental group. The study's goal was to examine the effects of the intervention, similar to previous studies (Akdamar & Sütçü, 2021; Loniza et al., 2018). The pre- and post-tests were employed to objectively measure any change in students' listening skills resulting from the instructional intervention. This approach allowed for a comparison of

learning outcomes before and after the application of digital storytelling, thereby enabling an assessment of its effectiveness in enhancing listening proficiency.

3.2 Study Population and Sampling

The study population comprised students from a school in Dumat Al-Jandal, located in Saudi Arabia. Specifically, the sample study consisted of 60 male sixth-grade students, who were conveniently assigned to either an experimental group (30) or a control group (30). The study complied with all official procedural and ethical requirements. Ethical approval was obtained from Jouf University, which in turn issued an official letter addressed to the Directorate of Education in the Al-Jouf province. The letter aimed to facilitate the researcher's access to conduct the study within public schools.

Based on this approval, the researcher contacted the targeted school and selected two sixth-grade classes, adhering strictly to the administrative and educational regulations governing such research. Prior to the study's implementation, consent to participate was obtained from the parents of the children who had been selected for the study by the Arabic language teacher. The intervention program commenced on 14 April 2024 and concluded on 27 May 2024. The pre-test was administered immediately before the program's launch, while the post-test was conducted the day after the program's conclusion.

3.3 Study Instrument

The study instrument consisted of a listening comprehension test, which was used to assess the children's performance in both the pre- and post-test of the experimental and control groups. The listening assessment included 30 multiple-choice questions, after which the scores were assessed. These results can be found in Appendices A, B, C and D. The questions were further categorized into four levels of listening, including comprehension skills, which were tested through six questions, deduction skills, relating to six questions, evaluation skills for audible contexts, consisting of five questions, and testing and critical evaluation skills, which included four questions.

3.4 Validity of the Instrument

The validity of the instrument was determined by providing the listening test to a team of educators and curriculum experts who specialize in Arabic language and teaching methods in order to ensure the clarity and relevance of the test items. Based on the team's feedback, several modifications were implemented as follows: redundant or unclear items were removed; the language of some questions was simplified to match the students' comprehension level; and a few items were revised to ensure alignment with the four listening sub-skills assessed in the study. Based on these modifications and the comments of the educators and experts regarding the relevance of the questions at each level, the final draft was adopted.

3.5 Reliability of the Instrument

A pilot study involving 28 students was carried out to ensure the instrument's reliability. Reliability was assessed using the SPSS 27 program for calculating

Cronbach's alpha. Cronbach's alpha score was 0.843, thus demonstrating the reliability of the question items as valid and acceptable.

3.6 Study Variables and Group Equivalence

In this study, digital storytelling represented the independent variable, while the dependent variable was listening skills. It is important to note the presence of potential external variables that may have influenced the study outcomes, such as the students' age, prior experience with digital storytelling, and the nature of the educational institution (i.e. a public primary school). Although these variables are acknowledged, they were not controlled for in the present study, which may be considered a limitation. Group equivalence was established before the intervention in terms of numerical distribution and students' baseline knowledge of listening skills. This was achieved by calculating the mean scores and standard deviations for both the experimental and control groups.

3.7 Instructional Program

As previously mentioned, the study involved two groups: an experimental group and a control group. Both groups were taught by the same Arabic language teacher at the school, following a briefing by the researcher regarding the study's objectives and the importance of avoiding instructional bias. The control group received instruction using traditional teaching methods, particularly avoiding the use of digital stories. In contrast, the experimental group was taught using one digital story per week.

The implementation of the digital storytelling strategy spanned six weeks, with one digital story being introduced each week during a regularly scheduled listening class. Having been carefully selected to align with the students' language proficiency level, the stories covered familiar, age-appropriate topics such as school life, travel experiences, cultural events, and daily routines. Each story was digitally produced using multimedia tools that combined audio narration, animated visuals, and background music to enhance auditory comprehension. Each 45-minute session followed the structured instructional sequence described below:

1 - Pre-listening (5 minutes): Key vocabulary was introduced using visual and audio cues, followed by predictive questions to activate students' prior knowledge and set expectations for the content.

2 - First listening (10 minutes): The digital story was played in full without interruption, allowing students to focus on general understanding and the overall message.

3 - Second listening (15 minutes): The story was replayed in segments, with pauses for comprehension-check questions (e.g. who, what, when, where), clarification of unfamiliar words, and brief teacher-led explanations.

4 - Post-listening discussion (10 minutes): Students engaged in paired or group discussions to reflect on the story, express their opinions, and make connections to their own experiences.

5 - Follow-up task (5 minutes): Learners completed a short activity—such as sequencing events, multiple-choice questions, or comparing characters—to reinforce comprehension.

Throughout the sessions, the teacher acted as a facilitator, guiding interactions and encouraging active participation. The integration of digital storytelling created a multimodal learning environment that supported the development of listening skills while promoting student engagement and motivation.

3.8 Statistical Analysis

Using SPSS Version 27, statistical analyses were performed. To assess the normality of the data, the Shapiro-Wilk test was conducted, revealing that the data were not normally distributed. Therefore, the Wilcoxon signed-rank test was employed. Normal test results are provided in Appendix D. Descriptive statistics were used for further analysis, represented as mean scores and standard deviation.

4. Results

According to the results of descriptive statistical analyses, Table 1 shows the mean scores and standard deviation results of the control group's performance in both pre- and post-tests. As can be seen from the table, the scores were relatively similar before and after the learning phase, indicating that there was no significant difference in the children's listening skills during this period.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of the Control Group

Items	Mean	Std. Deviation
Comprehension skills pre-test	17.00	.830
Deduction skills pre-test	16.00	.830
Evaluation of audible content skills pre-test	15.00	.830
Testing & critical evaluation skills pre-test	14.00	.830
Comprehension skills post-test	17.00	.830
Deduction skills post-test	16.00	.830
Evaluation of audible content skills post-test	15.00	.830
Testing & critical evaluation skills post-test	14.00	.830

Correspondingly, Table 2 demonstrates the mean values and standard deviation scores for the experimental group's pre- and post-test results. As Table 2 reveals, the experimental group's scores showed a substantial increase in the post-test compared to the pre-test.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of the Experimental Group

Items	Mean	Std. Deviation
Comprehension skills pre-test	17.33	1.124
Deduction skills pre-test	16.33	1.124
Evaluation of audible content skills pre-test	15.33	1.124
Testing & critical evaluation skills pre-test	14.33	1.124
Comprehension skills post-test	25.33	1.124
Deduction skills post-test	24.33	1.124
Evaluation of audible content skills post-test	23.33	1.124
Testing & critical evaluation skills post-test	22.33	1.124

Furthermore, as mentioned above, the Wilcoxon signed-rank test was applied to evaluate the differences within the data. Table 3 illustrates the Wilcoxon test findings for the control group's pre- and post-tests, indicating no significant difference in the p-values across all four skills.

Table 3: Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test Results for Pre- and Post-Test Score Differences in the Control Group

Items	Standardized Test Statistic (Z)	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)
Comprehension skills	0.000	1.000
Deduction skills	0.000	1.000
Evaluation of audible content skills	0.000	1.000
Testing & critical evaluation skills	0.000	1.000

Table 4 presents the findings of the pre- and post-test scores of the experimental group, indicating highly significant differences based on the p-values (<0.05), with Z values showing distinct improvements in the scores.

Table 4: Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test Results for Pre- and Post-Test Differences in the Experimental Group

Items	Standardized Test Statistic (Z)	Asymp. Sig.(2-tailed)
Comprehension skills	-5.477	.000
Deduction skills	-5.477	.000
Evaluation of audible content skills	-5.477	.002
Testing & critical evaluation skills	-5.477	.003

Similarly, Table 5 compares the results of the control and experimental groups for post-test analysis, which were taught with traditional methods and digital storytelling. The data shows a statistically significant difference in performance between the groups, as the p-values are <0.05, and the Z values also indicate a strong and consistent difference across all four levels. This further emphasizes that a notable improvement was observed in the scores of the post-test due to the intervention of the DST approach and that this distinction was a result of the intervention rather than any random variation.

Table 5: Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test Results for Pre- and Post-Test Score Differences in the Control and Experimental Groups (post-test results)

Items	Standardized Test Statistic (Z)	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)
Comprehension skills	-4.830	.000
Deduction skills	-4.830	.000
Evaluation of audible content skills	-4.830	.002
Testing & critical evaluation skills	-4.830	.003

5. Discussion

The present research aimed to explore the effectiveness of digital storytelling in developing listening skills for students learning an Arabic language course. Results obtained from this study align with existing research underlining the significance of DST in language learning. Based on the study findings, the pre-test results were similar for both groups; however, significant differences were noticed within the experimental group following the implementation of the DST approach. Based on the significant improvement in the results, it is clear that DST is a highly effective and relevant approach for enhancing students' listening comprehension skills.

Furthermore, the results also revealed that the DST approach was successful in improving all types of listening comprehension skills among the experimental group. Indeed, the scores for comprehension and deduction skills were notably higher than the evaluation and testing and critical evaluation skills, thus denoting the substantial impact of the DST approach on sixth-grade students. The higher scores are likely due to cognitive development, which essentially supports simple reasoning and recall, whereas the evaluation and critical appreciation skills call for a higher level of comprehension abilities.

This pattern of development further signifies that students should be guided gradually in developing higher-level listening abilities while implementing DST. Previously, many studies have integrated the DST approach to improve students' listening skills for educational purposes. The research findings highlight that a positive and remarkable improvement was observed in the listening skills of those students who were taught using the DST approach. The findings of our study are consistent with those of the Turkey-based study conducted by Akdamar and Sütçü (2021), who reported that DST listening activities resulted in higher proficiency among the experimental group in contrast to the control group. With the help of the DST strategy, learners are better able to summarize the listening tasks and paraphrase the materials, while their vocabulary is also enhanced (Ghanayem & Al-khawaldeh, 2025).

Recent studies have identified that the integration of technological tools such as DST can help overcome the challenges of learning Arabic. A Saudi Arabian study revealed that the use of digital tools accelerates learning, along with enthusiastic interaction with teachers. Furthermore, the digital tools needed for DST are portable and easy to use; therefore, the approach is also timesaving for teachers (Al-Mohawes, 2023). Moreover, various researchers have reported the efficiency of DST in improving students' critical, deductive, and active listening capabilities (Tabieh et al., 2021). A study of sixth-grade students in Vietnam reported the positive attitude of children toward DST as it increased students' excitement and boosted their interaction level (Chuyen & Thien, 2024).

As discussed previously, the study findings reveal that the students taught using the DST strategy outperformed the control group, which was taught using the traditional storytelling approach. This result aligns fully with that of the study by Yunita (2022), which evaluated the influence of DST in seventh-grade students. In

conclusion, the study reported that DST proved to be an effective digital tool that successfully enhanced listening skills as students paid attention to the visual elements, which attracted and appealed to them. Digital storytelling helps students engage in multiple senses and allows for deeper understanding and memory retention, thereby promoting a clearer comprehension of the information. In addition, Demirbaş and Şahin (2022) also suggested that the integration of DST frequently improved listening comprehension skills, thus building students' capabilities while honing their skills. Similar to our findings, Abd-Haq et al. (2025) noted that DST significantly enhanced the listening abilities of the experimental group, leading these participants to achieve higher scores in listening comprehension. Similarly, multiple studies have confirmed the benefits of digital storytelling among intermediate students, as it motivates students to develop their listening skills (Osman & Korkoman, 2023).

In this study, the use of DST for teaching listening comprehension skills to sixth-grade students has been closely examined. The analysis reveals the effectiveness of the DST strategy, with significant improvement in the students' listening performance following the intervention, as evidenced by higher post-test scores. Through this study, the usefulness of DST has been highlighted in the language learning context and its impact on students' learning outcomes. As indicated by the findings, DST is a productive pedagogical tool for language learning, allowing for better comprehension, retention, and engagement in student listening activities.

6. Conclusion

This study explored the effectiveness of digital storytelling as a learning tool to improve the listening skills of sixth-grade students in an Arabic language course. The results revealed significant improvement in the listening abilities of the students taught through the DST approach compared to the control group. Furthermore, the experimental group achieved higher scores in the post-test compared to the control group in all four elements of listening skills measured. The scores for comprehension and deduction skills were relatively higher than for evaluation and critical appreciation skills. This confirmed that digital storytelling positively impacts the development of listening comprehension and deduction skills.

Thus, DST has proven to be an approach that promotes participation and active engagement with a sensory experience that allows for a deeper understanding of the Arabic language. Moreover, the study notably contributes to the expanding body of literature that supports the integration of digital storytelling in language learning. Nevertheless, further research is needed to examine the broader applications of such tools in diverse educational contexts.

7. Implications

The findings of this study highlight the importance of integrating interactive digital media such as DST into language education, particularly for younger learners. These tools help create an engaging learning environment that accommodates diverse learning styles and provides extended opportunities for

both in-class and independent learning. In addition, the results also indicate the potential of DST as a supportive resource in teacher professional development programs, equipping educators to incorporate modern technologies into their classrooms effectively. On a theoretical level, the study underscores the need for further research into the impact of digital media on other language skills, such as speaking and reading, across various educational contexts. This would contribute to strengthening the synergy between technology and education and enriching the body of literature on Arabic language instruction, whether as a first or second language.

7.1 Limitations

The study was limited by several factors. First, the sample size was relatively small, which may affect the statistical power and generalizability of the results. Second, the sample consisted exclusively of male students, which restricts the applicability of the findings to a broader population, including female learners. This limitation is due to the educational system in Saudi Arabia, in which male and female students are segregated from Grade 4 through Grade 12, making mixed-gender sampling logistically and administratively unfeasible. Third, the sampling technique was purposive, which may introduce selection bias. Finally, the study employed specific instruments designed for this context, which may limit the comparability of the results with other studies using different tools.

7.2 Recommendations

The study calls for future research to include the incorporation of DST into the Arabic language curriculum to improve listening skills. Future research must focus on large sample sizes to assess the prolonged impact of DST on language proficiency with the help of longitudinal studies. It is also recommended that future investigations include female students to ensure the broader applicability of the findings across gender contexts, particularly within segregated educational systems. In addition, teachers should be professionally trained in the use of DST, and educators should have ample opportunities to ensure the effective application of DST strategies in the classroom. The DST educational approach can be made more accessible and user-friendly by creating digital repositories that include a collection of culturally relevant digital stories, customized according to the Arabic language curriculum and needs.

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Appendices

Appendix A: English Translation of the Listening Comprehension Test

Story

One bright and sunny morning, Sami, a cheerful 6-year-old boy, was super excited to go to the park with his best friend, Ahmed. Ahmed packed his favorite blue backpack with a shiny water bottle, a yummy sandwich, and his soccer ball. "This is going to be the best day ever!" he said, skipping out of the door.

At the park, the grass was green, the birds were chirping, and the swings were calling their names. Sami and Ahmed ran to the slide, laughing as they slid down— *whoosh!* — one after the other. Then they played tag, running around the big palm tree. Sami was so happy he felt like he could fly!

But when they sat down for a snack, Sami gasped. "Oh no! Where's my backpack?" he asked, looking around. His blue backpack was gone! He felt a little worried, but Ahmed smiled and said, "Don't worry, Sami! We'll find it together."

The two friends searched the park. They looked under the slide, behind the swings, and even near the fountain. Sami was starting to think he'd never see his backpack again. Then Ahmed pointed to a wooden bench near the big tree. "Look, Sami! Is that it?"

Sure enough, there was Sami's blue backpack, sitting on the bench! Sami ran over and hugged it. "My backpack! You're the best, Ahmed!" he said. Inside, his water bottle and sandwich were safe and sound.

Sami learned an important lesson that day: always keep your things close to you in the park. He and Ahmed shared the sandwich, played soccer, and laughed until the sun started to set. As they walked home, holding hands, Sami felt so happy to have a friend like Ahmed, who had helped him when he needed it most.

1. Comprehension Skills (Q1–Q9)

Q1. What is the main idea of the passage?

a) To describe a journey
b) To explain a recipe
c) To tell a story about friendship ✓
d) To talk about school rules

Q2. Who was the main character in the story?

a) Teacher
b) Sami ✓
c) Thamer
d) The bus driver

Q3. Where did the story take place?

a) At the zoo
b) In the school
c) In the park ✓
d) In a shopping mall

Q4. What happened after Sami lost his backpack?

a) He went home
b) He found it on a bench ✓
c) He cried loudly
d) He called the police

Q5. What was Sami feeling in the beginning?

a) Excited ✓
b) Bored

c) Sleepy
d) Angry

Q6. How did the story end?
a) Sami left alone
b) His friend helped him ✓
c) He found money
d) He got lost again

Q7. Which word best describes the mood of the story?
a) Sad
b) Mysterious
c) Happy ✓
d) Serious

Q8. Who helped Sami in the story?
a) The guard
b) His teacher
c) His friend Ahmed ✓
d) His father

Q9. What lesson can be learned?
a) Keep your belongings safe ✓
b) Don't go to parks
c) Stay at home
d) Never trust anyone

2. Deduction Skills (Q10–Q18)
Q10. If Sami hadn't checked the bench, what might have happened?
a) He would have found his backpack anyway
b) He might have lost his backpack for good ✓
c) He would have gone home early
d) He would have bought a new backpack

Q11. Why did the birds in the park keep chirping?
a) They were hungry
b) It was a sunny day ✓
c) They saw Sami's backpack
d) They were scared

Q12. What might happen next after Sami and Ahmed walk home?
a) They will have dinner with their families ✓
b) They will lose the backpack again
c) They will stay at the park all night
d) They will forget about the park

Q13. Why did Sami gasp when he noticed his backpack was missing?
a) He was surprised and worried ✓
b) He was playing a game
c) He was tired
d) He was joking with Ahmed

Q14. What can you guess about Sami based on the story?
a) He loves to play at the park ✓
b) He doesn't like friends
c) He is a teacher
d) He hates sunny days

Q15. What is the hidden message in Sami's story?
a) Friends help each other ✓
b) Parks are dangerous
c) Don't bring a backpack anywhere
d) Playing is not fun

Q16. Which sentence is true, based on the story?
a) Sami and Ahmed played at the park ✓
b) Sami lost his sandwich at home
c) Ahmed didn't help Sami
d) The park was closed

Q17. What would have happened if Ahmed hadn't helped Sami look for his backpack?
a) Sami might not have found his backpack ✓
b) Sami would have found it faster
c) Sami would have stayed at home
d) Sami would have laughed

Q**18. What did Sami mean when he said, "You're the best, Ahmed!"?**
a) He was angry at Ahmed
b) He was thankful for Ahmed's help ✓
c) He was joking
d) He wanted to leave the park

3. Evaluation of audible content (Q19–Q24)
Q19. What is the speaker's main goal?
a) To make you laugh
b) To teach you about being a good friend ✓
c) To describe the park
d) To talk about snacks

Q20. How do the speaker support their message about friendship?
a) By telling jokes
b) By sharing how Ahmed helped Sami ✓
c) By asking questions only
d) By talking about the weather

Q21. What makes the speaker believable?
a) They use a happy voice
b) They tell a true story about Sami and Ahmed ✓
c) They talk very fast
d) They are loud

Q22. What would make the speaker's message more convincing?
a) Adding more stories about Sami and Ahmed ✓
b) Talking about the trees in the park

c) Using harder words
d) Making it shorter

Q23. What is the tone of the speaker?
a) Sad
b) Happy ✓
c) Angry
d) Sleepy

Q24. What does the speaker want you to do?
a) Be a kind friend ✓
b) Go to the park
c) Eat a sandwich
d) Find a lost bag

Testing and Critical Evaluation (Q25–Q30)
Q25. Which speaker's argument is stronger?
a) The first speaker (ask an adult)
b) The second speaker (rely on Ahmed) ✓
c) Both are equal
d) Neither one

Q26. What evidence did the second speaker use?
a) Ahmed found Sami's backpack quickly ✓
b) Only their own opinion
c) A funny story
d) A loud voice

Q27. Which opinion do you agree with and why?
a) First speaker – because adults know everything
b) Second speaker – because friends can help solve problems ✓
c) Neither
d) Both are right

Q28. What is one bias shown by the first speaker?
a) They think only adults can help ✓
b) They love parks
c) They dislike bags
d) They want to play

Q29. How can the audio of the two speakers be improved?
a) By adding jokes
b) By explaining both sides clearly ✓
c) By making it shorter
d) By removing the story

Q30. What was missing in the first speaker's argument?
a) A story about how Ahmed helped Sami ✓
b) A loud voice
c) Funny words
d) A description of the park

Appendix B: Table 1: Specification of the listening skills test

Listening skills		Number of questions	Relative weight
Comprehension skills	Determine the central idea of the audible text.	1	3.33%
	Identify the main ideas of the audible text.	1	3.33%
	Identify the sub-ideas of the audible text.	2	6.66%
	Identify the main characters in the audible text.	2	6.66%
	Understand the meaning of words in an audible text through context.	2	6.66%
	Assign an alternative title to the audible text.	1	3.33%
Deduction skills	Evaluate the feasibility of the idea.	1	3.33%
	Arrange ideas in a logical sequence.	2	3.33%
	Evaluate the characters mentioned in the audio text.	2	6.66%
	Create an alternative ending for the audio text.	1	3.33%
	Predict what will be said in light of what the student has heard.	1	3.33%
	Summarize the audible text.	1	3.33%
Evaluation skills for audible content	Distinguish between fact and fiction in an audible text.	1	3.33%
	Suggest solutions to issues in the audible text.	1	3.33%
	Give feedback on the topics of the audible text.	1	3.33%
	Create an alternative ending for the audio text.	1	3.33%
	Identify hidden meanings in the text.	2	6.66%
Testing and critical evaluation skills	Emotionally engage the speaker.	1	3.33%
	Anticipate what the spoken text will lead to.	1	3.33%
	Explain the meanings of some of the expressions found in the text.	2	6.66%
	Derive the noble values from the text.	2	6.66%
	Total	30	100%

Appendix C: Table 2. Score Interpretation

Total Score	Proficiency Level	Description
25 – 30	Excellent	Demonstrates advanced listening comprehension and critical thinking.
19 – 24	Good	Shows good listening and inference skills with minor weaknesses.
13 – 18	Average	Demonstrates partial understanding but needs improvement in inference.
7 – 12	Below Average	Limited comprehension and deduction needs substantial improvement.
0 – 6	Poor	Struggles with basic listening comprehension.

Appendix D: Table 3: Normality Test Results

Tests of Normality						
	Kolmogorov-Smirnova			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	Df	Sig.	Statistic	Df	Sig.
Comprehension skills pre-test	.534	60	.000	.309	60	.000
Deduction skills pre-test	.	60	.	.	60	.
Evaluation skills for audible content pre-test	.	60	.	.	60	.
Testing & Critical evaluation skills pre-test	.	60	.	.	60	.
Comprehension skills post-test	.311	60	.000	.732	60	.000
Deduction skills post-test	.315	60	.000	.747	60	.000
Evaluation for audible content skills post-test	.317	60	.000	.745	60	.000
Testing and Critical evaluation skills post-test	.339	60	.000	.637	60	.000

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction