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Introduction

The study presents students' speaking skills using innovative education strategies: the digital storytelling method (DSM) in EFL classroom. Storytelling enables learners to analyse various actual topics using information technologies to present gathered information, to share and solve problems emphazing personal experiences. The study involved two groups of C1 level of students studying English for Culture and Arts at VMU. The research aimed to analyse the development of students' speaking skills based on the four criteria: fluency, grammatical accuracy, pronunciation accuracy, and coherence. The theoretical part discusses the theory of personalization, the DSM method and its types, application, and the benefits of using various information technologies in EFL classroom. During the research, DSM was used as an assignment that required students to choose the topic about famous Lithuanian artists and create a 2-5-minute video on their outstanding creative work and their concept of art. There were two stages for task evaluation: during the first one, students introduced the artists and interview scenarios with the questions, during the second one, students presented the video to the group, answered the students' questions and took part in the discussions.

Methods

The aim of this research is to reveal students' speaking skills using innovative education strategies. The model of DSM application process was taken from Samantha Morra and the pilot quantitative research was made. In this study there were 49 students of C1 level of English. EFL students of bachelor study programmes from different faculties took part in the study and answered the questionnaire of 10 questions. The research aimed to analyse the development of students' speaking skills based on the four criteria: fluency, grammatical accuracy, pronunciation accuracy, and coherence. The theoretical part was based on the theory of personalization and the DSM for language learning.

The **objectives** for achieving this aim are:

1. To analyze the theoretical sources on language skill evaluation, DSM, and its use in language education.

2. To observe and collect data on the speaking skills of students in the research groups.

3. To observe and collect data on the effects of DSM on students' speaking skills.

4. To study the benefits of DST on students' English-speaking skills development.

For these purposes two **research questions** were set:
1. What are the benefits of DSM to students' English-speaking skills?
2. How does DSM affect students' learning motivation?

Results

Having analysed the collected data, it appeared that the method is suitable for developing students' speaking skills, especially for improving fluency and coherence. Moreover, the integration of DSM preparing video interviews about local famous artists, discussing about their creative work and speaking about personal experiences while interviewing artists has made a favourable impact on students' motivation, IT and listening skills development. The students emphasized that it was useful and interesting.

Table 1. shows the distribution of students' opinions about the speaking skills development based on 4 criteria (%).

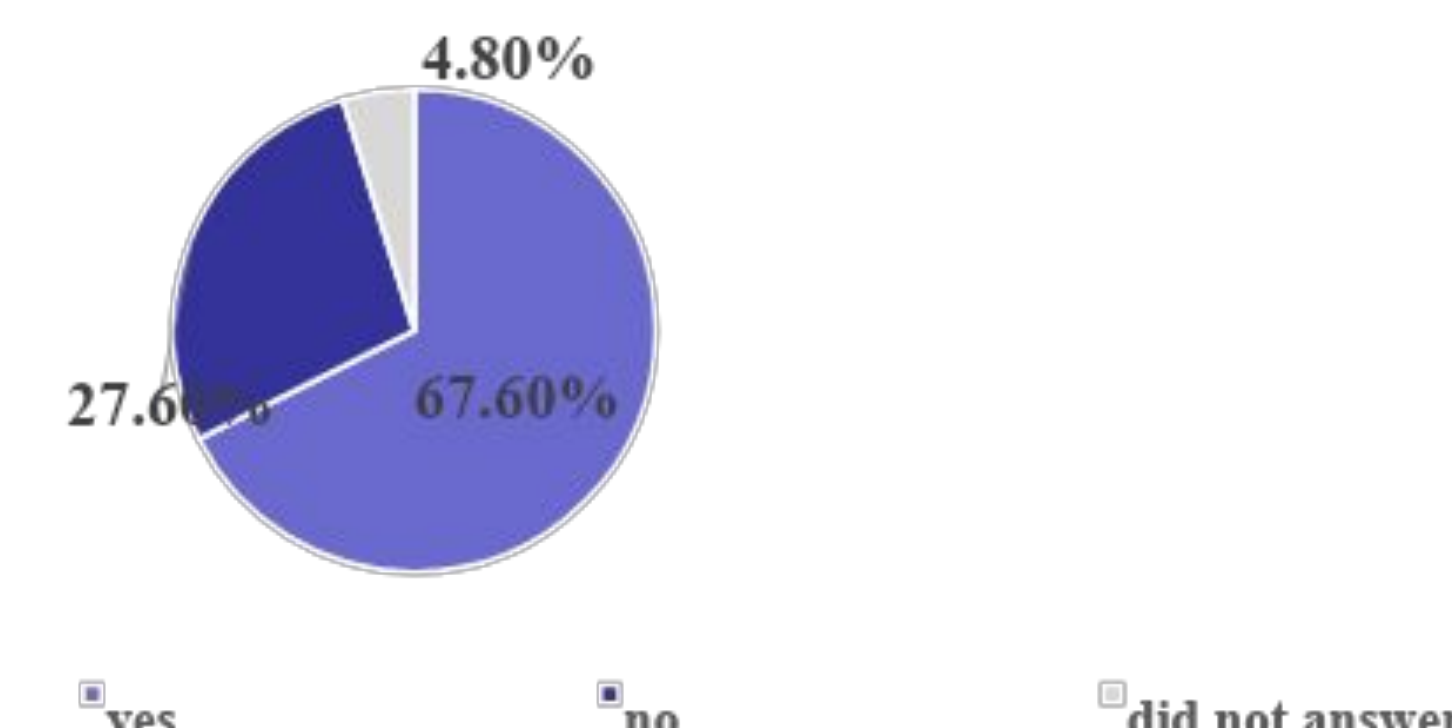| No	1. Useful	%
1	Increased grammatical accuracy	11,4
2	Increased coherence	28,6
3	Increased pronunciation accuracy	11,4
4	Increased fluency	42,9

Chart 1. demonstrates students' answers about learning motivation using DSM.

The study revealed that 67,6 % of students had positive evaluation about learning motivation using DSM.

Conclusions

The study demonstrated that the students were more engaged in preparing video interviews and presentations as well as managed to communicate using varied linguistic constructions. Moreover, the study results revealed that the respondents improved 4 basic speaking skills, especially fluency. The students also marked that it was challenging for them to prepare those tasks finding the artists and interviewing them. However, negative aspect of the digital storytelling method was observed as not all students demonstrate adequate use of IT tools, also a lack of learning to learn skills was determined.

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