

## Digital Stories to Teach English to Young Learners: Prospective ELT Teachers' Beliefs, Attitudes and Experiences

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### ABSTRACT

Equipping prospective teachers (PTs) of young English learners with a variety of child-appropriate materials and techniques is very prominent. Digital Stories (DSs) with their multimodal features enable teachers to meet the needs of 21<sup>st</sup> century digital native students when learning a foreign language. Thus, the study aims to investigate the beliefs, attitudes and experiences of 75 prospective English teachers of Uludağ University ELT department about the creation and using child-appropriate digital stories to teach English to young learners (YLS). The data were collected through a 5-point Likert scale questionnaire with 26 items and the Cronbach alpha of the items was .87. In addition, a semi-structured interview was conducted with 10 participants to delve into the results obtained from the questionnaire. The descriptive analysis of the questionnaire revealed that nearly all of the participants agreed that digital stories should be used to take children's attention easily, better learn a foreign language, increase YLS' motivation, change the dynamics of the traditional classrooms, and keep YLS' attention throughout the lesson. However, based on their own experience in creating a child-appropriate digital story, nearly half of them reported that it was not easy to create an effective DS without being educated.

**Key Words:** ELT prospective teachers, a child-appropriate digital story, teaching English to children, beliefs and experiences.

### INTRODUCTION

Children have fantasy world and like meaning-based imaginative play. Through stories, children's interests, attention, and imagination are engaged meaningfully (Read, 2007; Robin, 2008). In addition, stories with familiar cross-curricular topics can bring the world into the classroom to enable learners compensate the distance between learners' world and the language (Skouge & Rao, 2009; Yılmaz & Karatepe, 2013). Because children have great capacity to pick up ready phrases, in other words, chunks (Moon, 2000) both digital and print-based stories with repetitive and predictable formulas and patterns help learners develop cognitive and language skills (Porrás González, 2010). Furthermore, they foster learners' social/ emotional skills and attitudes as they listen, provide a response of laughter, sadness, excitement, and anticipation, collaborate, take turns, show respect for others (Brewster, Ellis & Girard, 1992; Çubukçu, 2012; Haznedar, 2010; Read, 2007). Thus, it is very prominent for teachers to have the repertoire of various stories as teaching resources (Skouge & Rao, 2009).

Human cognition and learning could be facilitated through the growing use of intelligent software agents (Natriello, 2007). Hence, in addition to print-based stories, the digital storytelling should be used as one of the innovative pedagogical tools as it is considered as "a modern incarnation of the traditional art of oral storytelling" to provide deeper and more meaningful learning (Smeda, Dakich & Sharda, 2014, p.2),

### DIGITAL STORIES AS INNOVATIVE PEDAGOGICAL TOOLS

DSs are defined as; "3-5 minute long computer-based and user-generated short video clips that enable learners to utilize and combine various skills" (Köse & Küçüköğlü, 2012, p. 396). They help learners build communication and information-creation skills (Abdul-Ameer, 2014; Köse & Küçüköğlü, 2012; McGeoch, 2012; Salkhord, Gorjian & Pazhakh, 2013). DSs with multimodal features such as visual and audio component through the integration of text, images can motivate and engage learners easily, develop the ability to solve problems, facilitate their meaning making, and enable learners to work with both text and multimedia to gain multiple skills (Keşli Dollar & Tekiner Tollu, 2015; Ohler, 2013; Oskoz & Elola, 2016; Salkhord et al., 2013; Tiba, Condy, Chigona & Tunjera, 2015; Timuçin & Irgin, 2015; Xie, 2016).

Among a great deal of research related to digital storytelling, the following studies are the most related ones to provide a basis for the present study. For instance, Xie (2016) conducted a one-year teaching project in which 54 Chinese university-level students were created digital stories in small groups in a content-based course after being introduced how to do it to explore how and to what extent students' motivation and efficiency in EFL learning were influenced through digital storytelling. The results indicated the following positive points regarding digital story telling; project-based group learning was considered as an efficient way to feel stronger sense of competition and achievement; students' passion and motivation were enhanced, the ability to integrate

various materials was developed, students' sense of achievement were increased through having product outcomes, target content was learned more efficiently besides having deep learning due to the students' reflection on what they were learning critically and creatively. However, the following challenges were reported regarding making a digital storytelling such as the necessity of being trained about how to use the required software to make videos, limited time to create their own videos, and their worries with regards to the use digital storytelling efficiently in crowded classrooms.

Furthermore, the study by Lei (2009) which was conducted with 2007 intake freshmen in teacher education programs at a large northeastern university revealed that most of the participants had moderate confidence in using classroom technologies despite having strong positive beliefs in technology. The study indicated that being digital native students might not guarantee being digital native teachers. Hence, teacher education programs are responsible for helping them become digital-native teachers who can use classroom technologies in critical, wise and meaningful ways by considering that not all pre-service teachers were exposed to the digital technologies equally despite growing up in digital age. The following suggestions were given in the study:

(a) expose preservice teachers to a variety of technologies that can be used to support different teaching and learning activities, (2) emphasize subject-specific technology, (3) include assistive technology as an important component of teacher technology preparation programs, (4) help preservice teachers understand the enabling conditions for technology use, (5) help preservice teachers make meaningful connections between technology and teaching" (Lei, 2009, p. 92-93).

Tiba et al. (2015) conducted a qualitative study with 50 South African pre-service teachers via five focused group interviews to explore their perceptions of the potential benefits of Digital Story Telling (DST) and perceived barriers to DST uptake during in-service practice. The results of the transcribed data revealed that most of the participants valued the importance of DST in today's classroom as it has potential to motivate and engage learners easily, to promote collaboration and self-expression besides developing multiple skills including critical thinking, communication and language skills, particularly writing skills. However, they also remarked the following perceived barriers to DST uptake during in-service practice such as a lack of resources, self-confidence and time due to restrictive curricula in addition to their lack of technological knowledge of how to teach with DST.

Timuçin & Irgin (2015) examined how 16 Turkish EFL university students studying at the Preparatory School of a state university in Turkey construct knowledge with digital storytelling. The participants were provided the digital environment for digital stories is Kerpoof Studio website operated by Walt Disney Company. The overall results indicated that digital environment increased the students' motivation to learn and increased the creativity of learners. In addition, this experience helped the participants become aware of both media and visual literacy, transform the curricular content into the digital storytelling, take up multidimensional roles, and develop their writing skills.

The fact that students who were taught via DSs online by computer outperformed the students who were taught through the stories based on only the teacher not the technology was reported in the following studies such as Abdul-Ameer (2014) for comprehending new vocabulary items and gaining four basic language skills particularly listening comprehension, Salkhord, Gorjian & Pazhakh (2013) for reading skills, Verdugo & Belmonte (2007) for listening skills, and Hwang, Shadiev, Hsu, Huang, Hsu, & Lin (2016) for oral skills. Being aware of the emerged positive experimental research results in favor of the use of DSs in EFL learning, EFL teachers and PTs should be trained about how to create and integrate DSs.

In addition, constructivism has been adopted by the Turkish Ministry of National Education as an educational philosophical viewpoint since 2005 (Özar, 2012). However, as reported by Kırkgöz (2009) constructivist approach has not been adequately implemented in the realms of Turkish classrooms. Thus, EFL teachers should seek for innovative pedagogical tools which foster constructivist thinking. As suggested by Smeda et al. (2014), digital storytelling is one of the most suitable ways to follow a constructive approach to learning as students who were given basic instructions construct and reflect their own understanding via interactions and experiences to be able to create their own digital story.

Therefore, as also mentioned by Tiba et al. (2015), it is very prominent for PTs to be equipped with not only content and pedagogy knowledge but also with technological knowledge to enable them to integrate technology into their curriculum. For instance, ELT prospective teachers can learn how to digitalize a story as a tool for language learning and teaching material for YLs by using some of the most common free-of-charge digital story telling programs such as Windows Movie Maker, Microsoft Photo Story 3 (for Windows based PCs), and iMovie for Macintosh computers (Köse & Küçüköglü, 2012). However, the challenges of integrating technology

into classrooms should be considered to get benefit from technology more effectively. Groff and Mouza (2008, p. 42) reported many challenges some of which were as follows: “lack of teacher input on the development of innovations for instructional use; teacher beliefs, attitudes, and concerns about classroom technology use— inexperience with technology, the shift of pedagogical practices, management issues, and the possibility of new roles and teaching style...”. Believing that teachers’ experiences are affected by their beliefs and attitudes, the researcher aimed to answer the following research questions:

- RQ1: What are the beliefs and attitudes of the 3rd year ELT prospective teachers with regard to the use of digital stories to Teach English to Young Learners (TEYLs)?
- RQ2: What are the experiences of the 3rd year ELT prospective teachers in creating child-appropriate digital stories to TEYLs?
- RQ3. Is there a statistically significant difference between digital native and digital immigrant participants regarding the creation of child-appropriate DSs and integrating them into YLs’ classrooms?
- RQ4: Is Microsoft Photo Story 3 (for Windows based PCs) an effective program to digitalize a child-appropriate DS?

## METHOD

A mixed method research design with both quantitative and qualitative methods was used to answer the aforementioned research questions.

### Context and Participants of the Study

The study was conducted with 75 third year ELT students of Uludag University enrolled in TEYL course I which is a part of the National Curriculum ELTP by Turkish MoNE. The participants who were trained about some knowledge about children’s characteristic and how they learn a language were expected to be equipped with how to teach YLs. The participants, as a group of 5 or 6 members, were demanded to prepare ten different tasks such as preparing child-appropriate materials, activities, and lesson plans to be performed in the practice part of the course throughout the term after being lectured in the theoretical lesson. As a final task, they were asked to create a child-appropriate DS based on one of the units of the Turkish primary state school curriculum in two-weeks. In the first week, they wrote their script. After getting feedback from the instructor about the title, content, context, characters, length and language aspect of the story, they digitalized their stories in the following week to be watched as a class and evaluated by the instructor in the practice part of the course. In addition to watching previously created DSs to discuss their weaknesses and strengths, the participants were informed about DSs, particularly how to digitalize an effective child-appropriate DSs through Microsoft Photo Story 3 (for Windows based PCs) in the theoretical course to support the participants to complete the task. Although Microsoft Photo Story 3 was suggested and explained step by step (for further see Köse & Küçüköğlü, 2012) in the course, the participants were free to use another programs to digitalize their stories.

### Data Collection Instruments

The data collection instruments were a 26-item 5-point Likert scale questionnaire, an open-ended questionnaire, and a semi-structured questionnaire. First part of the closed questionnaire aimed to find out their beliefs about the use of DSs in the YLs’ classrooms whereas the second part aimed at investigating their experiences when creating their DSs. Simultaneously, an open-ended questionnaire was administered to the participants to enable them to share their views and experiences with regard to the program they used to create their DSs. Finally, a semi-structured interview was conducted with 10 participants (5 digital native & 2 half digital half immigrant & 3 digital immigrants) to delve into the results obtained from the questionnaires. The interview questions were as follows:

1. What do you think of the use of child-appropriate DSs in YLs’ classrooms?
2. How was your experience in creating your DS as a two-week group task?
3. How do you define yourself? Digital Native or Digital Immigrant? Do you feel yourself competent in using DSs? Why?

### Data Analysis Procedure

The quantitative data were analysed firstly through descriptive statistics including mean, standard deviations and frequencies of the items secondly through independent sample t-test to compare the results based on the groups (digital native & digital immigrant). The Cronbach’s Alfa coefficient was found 0.87 which is acceptable. Therefore, the structured questionnaire could be said to have acceptable internal consistency. Moreover, the opinions of the three experts in instructional technologies and material design were taken to validate the content of the questionnaire. 4 items were modified based on their comments. On the other hand, the qualitative data obtained from the open-ended questionnaire and the extracts of the interviews were analysed through content analysis of the participants’ manuscripts.

## RESULTS

### RQ1: What are the beliefs and attitudes of the 3rd year ELT prospective teachers with regard to the use of digital stories to TEYLs?

The results of the closed questionnaire were presented in two different tables: table 1 displays the participants' beliefs about the benefits of using DSs into YLs' classrooms and table 2 shows their beliefs about the integration of DS into YLs' classrooms and the necessity for effective teacher training.

**Table 1 Results of the Descriptive Statistics Regarding Beliefs about the advantages of using DSs into YLs' classrooms**

Items	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	Strongly Disagree/ Disagree (%)	Neutral (%)	Strongly Agree/ Agree (%)
12. It becomes easier for teachers to take children' attention through DSs due to its multimodal components	73	4,45	,76	2.7	8.12	89
4. DSs help YLs better learn a foreign language due to its multimodal components.	74	4,35	,81	1.4	13.5	85.1
8. I believe that teachers can increase YLs' motivation through the use of DSs.	72	4,34	,69	0	12.5	87.5
7. I believe that teachers can change the dynamics of the traditional classrooms through the use of DSs	74	4,24	,79	2.7	13.5	83.7
13. It becomes easier for teachers to keep YLs' attention throughout the lesson via DS-based activities	72	4,23	,84	2.8	18.1	79.1

The results revealed that nearly all of the participants whether they were digital native or immigrant were (93.2%) agreed that DSs should be integrated into YLs' classrooms in this 21st-century. It was clear that most of the participants believed the advantages of using DSs with their multimodal components as follows; taking children' attention easily, better learning a foreign language, increasing YLs' motivation, changing the dynamics of the traditional classrooms, and keeping YLs' attention easily throughout the lesson. The following interview extracts can shed light on the participants' aforementioned high level positive beliefs about the use of DSs into YLs' classrooms referring to some advantages of them.

*I3: «Children love looking at the screen. They tend to watch TV or play with tablet or mobile phone. They are familiar with technology. We can say that today's children are digital native. Thus, we cannot ignore the use of technology in our classrooms».*

*I2: «I think we should certainly use DSs when teaching English because children learn by doing. When I observe them in real classrooms, I realized that they continuously repeated the chunks in the video. They didn't want us to close the video. Even after closing the video they went on repeating by themselves. In a sense, they made their own videos. Thus, their learning became easy and permanent».*

*I01: «I think DSs help children understand the target language as we have opportunity to visualize the target chunks. If the chunks are repeated several times they keep on saying them. In addition, they tend to imitate what they are watching».*

Table 2 indicates the results of the descriptive statistics regarding the participants' beliefs about the integration of DS into regular classroom teaching and necessity for effective training to be able to achieve this appropriately.

**Table 2 Results of the Descriptive Statistics Regarding Beliefs about the use of DSs into YLs' classrooms.**

Items	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	Strongly Disagree/ Disagree (%)	Neutral (%)	Strongly Agree/ Agree (%)
2. DSs should be integrated into YLs' classrooms in this 21st-century.	73	4,54	,70	2.7	4.1	93.2
1. I believe that teachers need effective training to use DSs appropriately in their classrooms.	73	4,27	,76	1.4	13.5	83.6
10. Integrating DSs into regular classroom teaching might be challenging for teachers.	74	3,74	,90	8.2	28.4	63.5
18. I believe that teachers can easily integrate DSs into their English lessons.	74	3,72	,94	10.9	24.3	64.9

As seen in the above table, there appeared contradictory results concerning the integration of DSs into the participants' classroom teaching despite their high level of positive beliefs about the necessity for the use of DSs into YLs' classrooms (93.2%). More than half of the participants (63.5%) thought that it would be neither challenging nor easy (64.9%) for teachers to use DSs into language classrooms. This result was supported by their positive beliefs about the importance of teacher training as most of them (83.6%) believed that they needed to be trained effectively to use DSs in their classrooms appropriately. The following interview extract might support the aforementioned results.

*17: "I do not think that I am good at something done with the computer. Actually, we learnt many things concerning the use of technology during the course entitled "Instructional Technologies and Material Design" at the university. However, I hold off from using the technological devices in the classroom".*

It is understood that some of the participants had hesitation in integrating technology into their classrooms due to lack of technology competence and self-confidence. Therefore, most of them believed (83%) the necessity for teachers to be trained to use DSs appropriately in their classrooms.

### **RQ2. What are the experiences of the 3rd year ELT prospective teachers in creating child-appropriate digital stories to TEYLs?**

The results of the second part of the questionnaire regarding the experiences of the participants were presented in three different tables indicating the skills developed through creating DSs, the process through which they were instructed about child-appropriate DSs, shown previously created DSs, and given opportunities to discuss about their quality based on the criteria given by the instructor, and the participants' affective states respectively. Table 3 demonstrates to what extent creating a child-appropriate DS contributed their development from various aspects.

**Table 3 Results of the Descriptive Statistics Regarding the advantages of creating a DS for ELT Prospective Teachers**

Items	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	Strongly Disagree/ Disagree (%)	Neutral (%)	Strongly Agree/ Agree (%)
3. Putting the pictures into logical order when creating our DS increased my organisation skills.	74	4,32	,77	2.7	10.8	86.4
6. Vocalizing our DS helped me understand how I use English including pronunciation, intonation etc.	74	4,28	,80	2.8	9.5	87.8
25. Creating a DS helped us use our information creation skills.	74	4,05	,80	2.8	17.6	79.7
5. Writing the script increased my creativity	74	4,08	,79	2.7	19.2	78.1
14. Creating a DS as a group helped us develop our social skills.	72	3.75	1,08	11.1	27.8	61.1
24. Creating a DS helped us develop our language skills.	74	3.71	1,02	9.5	29.7	60.8
21. Creating a DS helped me understand the world of the child better.	74	3.83	1,02	9.5	28.4	62.1

Based on the mean scores, it is clear that creating a child-appropriate DS made a significant contribution to the participants' organisation skills via putting the pictures into logical order ( $M= 4.32$ ) and phonological development through vocalizing ( $M= 4.28$ ) at the very most. In addition, most of them remarked that they used their information creation skills when creating their DSs (79.7%) and writing the script increased their creativity (78.1%). Finally, more than half of them reported that they developed their social skills (61.1%), language skills (60.8%), and understanding the world of the child better. The interview results support some of the aforementioned points as follows:

*13: "Children follow the process very carefully and give too much importance to visuality. Although we were able to write the script in a very short time, we allocated much of our time to find and form our pictures. The subject was daily routine; thus, it was very important to find night pictures with our character. We discussed what to do as a group. We could not exclude the night part of the story. Finally, we decided to blacken the*

background colour. It was very time-consuming and difficult to organize pictures to have meaningful and coherent story...”.

17: “Knowing the programs is not enough to be able to create a child-appropriate DS. It required us to be aware of the children’s interests. They do not watch Buggs Bunny as we did. Thus, we asked many 4<sup>th</sup> graders to get information about their favourite cartoons to be able choose our story characters. We believed that once we found their favourite characters, it would be easier to take their attention and sustain their interests throughout the lesson...”.

Table 4 displays the results concerning both theoretical and practical process to create a DS.

**Table 4 Results of the Descriptive Statistics Regarding the Process of Creating a DS for ELT Prospective Teachers**

Items	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	Strongly Disagree/ Disagree (%)	Neutral (%)	Strongly Agree/ Agree (%)
20. The elements of an effective DS explained by the instructor helped us to create the DS of better quality.	74	4,25	,75	1.4	14.9	83.7
22. Discussing the elements of an effective DS in the lesson helped us to create the DSs of better quality.	73	4,21	,73	2.7	9.6	87.7
19. Watching the final version of our DSs in the classroom helped us to reflect on our own learning.	74	4,18	,80	4.1	12.2	83.8
16. I can individually prepare a DS-based lesson plan with child appropriate activities.	74	4,01	,86	6.8	16.2	77
11. Creating a DS required us to possess high computer skills.	74	3.13	1,12	32.4	21.6	45.9
26. I could have easily created a DS without watching and discussing on the samples.	74	2.64	1,23	48.7	27	24.4

As presented in table 4, to be able to create a DS of better quality the participants got benefit from the explanation of the instructor about the elements of an effective DS ( $M= 4.25$ ) and the discussion part immediate after the lecturing ( $M= 4.21$ ). This can be supported by the following interview extract:

13: “Creating an effective DS is not an easy job such as writing on Microsoft Word. I think creating a DS is not something done with computer easily. It is a complex task which required us to vocalize, combine many pictures together to have a meaningful story. Thus, what you said about creating an effective child-appropriate DS helped us understand your expectations besides the discussion we had after watching the sample DSs which enabled us to have an idea about the qualified DS...”

Moreover, majority of them (83.8%) asserted that they did reflection on their own learning after watching their DSs. The following two extracts might show how they did reflection.

17: «Watching the sample DSs prepared by the former PTs helped us to understand your expectations from us when preparing child appropriate DSs. You (referring the instructor) explained the reasons why the samples were bad or good. When watching our own DSs we said that our group’s DS was not bad at all but could have been better».

The results also revealed that although most of the participants (77%) felt confident in planning a DS-based lesson with child appropriate activities, half of them reported lack of confidence in creating a DS alone without watching and discussing on the samples (48.7%). Similarly, nearly half of them considered that creating a DS required them to possess high computer skills (45.9). The extract below might explain why they found difficult to create a DS alone.

110: «I could plan a lesson based on a DS but I cannot prepare a DS alone. I think I am not a digital native, so it is too difficult for me to prepare alone. Preparing as a group is better because there are lots of things to be considered, for instance, their ages. Our story was for 2<sup>nd</sup> graders. It was also 3<sup>rd</sup> unit. It means that it was a starting point. Because they do not know anything in English creating a meaningful and child appropriate context became very difficult for us. I can say that we forced ourselves to be creative. Keeping the story at  $i+1$  level was really trouble for us. Choosing the characters was also very difficult. We thought our childhood firstly

(Cedric) but we noticed that we did not know currently popular characters (Niloya). Thus, we searched on YouTube...».

Table 5 indicates the descriptive statistics of the participants' affective states with regard to creating a child-appropriate DS.

**Table 5 Results of the Descriptive Statistics Regarding Affective Aspects of Creating a DS for ELT Prospective Teachers**

Items	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	Strongly Disagree/ Disagree (%)	Neutral (%)	Strongly Agree/ Agree (%)
23. Creating a DS helped us build self-confidence in using technology for educational purposes.	73	4,10	,90	6.8	10.8	82.4
17. I was happy to learn how to create a DS.	74	4,22	,88	2.8	17.6	79.7
9. I was motivated to learn how to create a DS.	72	3,69	,97	12.5	25	62.5

As revealed in table 5, while more than half of the participants (62.5%) were motivated to learn how to create a DS it is notable that some of them (25%) were not motivated before involving the process. However, after the process, most of them (79.7%) fostered positive attitudes towards learning how to create a DS. In the wake of this experience, it is pleasing that creating a DS helped most of them (82.4%) build self-confidence in using technology for educational purposes. In the following extract, one of the interviewees mentioned about her feelings after watching their product outcome.

15: «When watching our own DS I firstly said «Yeess! We did a good job. Later, I thought that we could have found better pictures... Because I know that I can prepare lots of materials even DSs I feel happy as a PT...»

**RQ3. Is there a statistically significant difference between digital native and digital immigrant participants regarding the creation of child-appropriate DSs and integrating them into YLs' classrooms?**

Depending on whether the participants were digital native or immigrant, the T-test results indicated a significant difference pertaining to only one item, which is displayed in table 6.

**Table 6 Independent Sample T-test Results Regarding the Integrating Child-appropriate DSs**

Item 10	Groups	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	df	t	p
Incorporating DSs into regular classroom teaching might be challenging for teachers.	Digital Native	39	<b>3.46</b>	,94	67	-2,897	<b>.005</b>
	Digital Immigrant	30	<b>4.06</b>	,73			

As seen in table 6, the results of the independent sample T-test revealed a significant difference between two groups regarding only one item. Based on the mean scores, it is clear that ELT prospective teachers who were digital immigrant believed more than the digital native participants that incorporating DSs into regular classroom teaching might be challenging for teachers. The extracts below indicated how creating a DS was considered differently by the participants depending whether they were digital native or immigrant:

19: «The process was easy for me because I know the required programs. I think I am a digital native but not at advanced level. The most difficult aspect for lots of my friends was to find out the most appropriate pictures for the script. However, I know the programs to design pictures... »

14: «It was very challenging for me to understand the required programs. Therefore, I contributed to the other tasks. For instance, I am good at drama and I vocalized different characters».

**RQ4: Is Microsoft Photo Story 3 (for Windows based PCs) an effective program to digitalize a child-appropriate DS?**

The results of the open-ended questionnaire revealed the frequency of the programs used by the participants as displayed in the following table. Table 7 indicates the frequency of the programs used by the participants to create their DSs.

Table 7 The Frequency of the Programs Used by the Participants to create a child-appropriate DS

The Programs used to create DSs	Microsoft Photo Story 3	Movie Maker	Microsoft Photo Story 3 & Camtasia	Story Bird	Microsoft Photo Story 3 & Toondo	Paint & PowerPoint
Number and Frequency of the of the Participants	36 (%48)	18 (%24)	5 (% 6.6)	6 (% 8)	4 (% 5.3)	6 (% 8)

As indicated in table 7, more than half of the participants (60 %) reported that they used Microsoft Photo Story 3 to create their DSs and it was an effective program with technical facilities to create DSs whereas 40 % of them used another programs considering that the program was very old and not effective. Content analysis of the students' extracts revealed that most of the participants who used Microsoft Photo Story 3 stated that the program was very useful, free, and easy to be used even by those who were digital immigrant or those who had never used any applications before. They also reported that they could add images, narrate their voices, and add texts at the same time easily besides setting the time to customize motions as they wanted. As a drawback of the program, they mentioned that the effects of the program were not of high quality as it was old software.

The analysis indicated that those who were digital native preferred to use different programs from Microsoft Photo Story 3. They mentioned about why they tended to use additional or another programs as follows: for Camtasia, they believed that they could insert background sound of better quality and also narrate their voices more than once; for Toondo, they explained that they wanted to create their stories as cartoon style believing that it was advantage to create new images freely; for PowerPoint, they emphasized that it was alone a good program to create a DS. If it was used with some programs which allow designing pictures such as Paint, Pixlr, Photoshop etc. it would be better and more attractive; for Moviemaker, it was reported that it easier via this program to adjust the sound and pictures. Customizing notion was smoother and of high quality; for Storybird, they stated that they could not only set subtitles and photos but also break down the videos into parts as they wished.

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The study aimed to reveal ELT prospective teachers' beliefs, attitudes and experiences regarding the use of and creation of child-appropriate DSs. As mentioned by some researchers such as Porras González (2010), Read (2007), Robin (2008), Tiba et al. (2015), and Timuçin & Irgin (2015), the overall result of the study indicated that nearly all of the participants agreed that DSs should be integrated in YLs' classrooms believing the power of it to take the pupils' attention easily, help them better learn a foreign language, increase YLs' motivation, change the dynamics of the traditional classrooms, and to keep YLs' attention easily throughout the lesson. This result may be attributed to the fact that ELT prospective teachers are aware of how the use of technology becomes unavoidable in today's world through having an impact on variety of fields, and education is no exception. Their high motivation and their positive attitudes towards learning how to create and integrate DSs in their future classrooms to teach a foreign language to YLs corroborates the fact that the teachers of 21<sup>st</sup> century should not be digital immigrant when teaching to the learners who are mostly technology savvy (Tiba et al., 2015).

As suggested by Tiba et al. (2015), this study revealed that creating a child appropriate DS enabled ELT prospective teachers blend technological, content, and pedagogy knowledge as they were required not only to write a script including the chunk/s compatible with the target unit of the curriculum, choose the most appropriate characters by taking the target group's age and interests into account, upload well-matched pictures with the text, vocalize the story by giving importance to the supra-segmental features. In other words, due to having multidimensional roles, they used not only their technology competence by using the programs to create their DSs but also their knowledge about how children learn and how to teach them accordingly. Therefore, in line with the study by Xie (2016), the participants of this study suggested that creating a child-appropriate DS as a group-work task rather than an individual task was better to prepare a more effective and of high quality DS. Furthermore, as also mentioned by Robin (2006), when working as a group for digital storytelling, they develop their social skills as they brainstorm and discuss their ideas collaboratively in addition to work sharing depending on their individual strengths such as having content knowledge, pedagogy knowledge and technological knowledge.

In line with Smeda et al. (2014) who asserted that DST is one of the most innovative pedagogical tools to foster constructivist thinking, the ELT prospective teachers in this study constructed their own understanding and reflected on their own learning via creating a child-appropriate DS, which is the essence of constructivism.



Because constructivism has been suggested by MoNE as an educational philosophical viewpoint since 2005, the PTs should be given more tasks such as creating DS to develop various skills including organization skills, information creation skills, social skills, and language skills in addition to developing autonomy through constructing their own learning.

In addition, similar to the findings of the study by Lei (2009), most of the participants of this study fostered positive attitudes towards learning how to create a DS, which increased their self-confidence in using technology for instructional purposes. Before being involving in preparing a DS as an instructional technology, motivating students particularly those who are digital immigrant might be difficult as experienced in this study. However, providing support such as informing the elements of an effective DS, enabling students to discuss about strengths and weaknesses of sample child-appropriate DSs, and allowing them to work as a group might facilitate the process of creating a DS.

Another point to consider based on the interview results is that, the experiences of the participants varied depending on whether they were digital native and digital immigrants. It is clear that digital native participants contributed technological aspects such as the use of story-telling programs more to the completion of the task. On the other hand, those who were digital immigrants considered the process of creating a DS challenging and thought that it required them to have high computer skills. However, performing the task collaboratively enabled them to contribute to the achievement of the task through writing the script through finding an interesting and child appropriate context, finding the most matched pictures, vocalizing the story as dramatic as they could. Agreeing with Lei (2009) who claimed that being a digital native student cannot guarantee being a digital native teacher, the study suggest that teacher educators who expect their PTs to perform tasks that require the use or creation of instructional technologies should provide support without considering whether they are digital native or immigrant. The participants of the study created their DSs via using different programs reporting their pros and cons. Thus, it would be better for teacher educators to keep up with the technological innovations to be able to suggest the newest and the most qualified apps for digital storytelling.

To sum up, it is clear that we are living in the digital age and technology is moving too fast. Hence, it was not easy for some PTs to create a DS without being educated and supported due to lack of knowledge about the required software to create DSs and lack of confidence in using them in the realms of classrooms as also noted by Xie (2016) and Tiba et al. (2015). Thus, as revealed by Timuçin & Irgin (2015), this study support that the more students are exposed to digital environment and the more they are given tasks including the use of technological devices the more they become aware of both media and visual literacy and they foster positive attitudes towards creating and using technological tools for instructional purposes.

## IMPLICATION AND SUGGESTIONS

Today's children are born into digital environment and grow up with technology in different aspects of their lives. Because learners of new generations are mostly digital native, teachers, PTs, and teacher educators should ask themselves whether they are digital native or immigrant. They should seek for opportunities for integrating technology into regular teaching to better teach a foreign language. We, teacher educators, evaluate our syllabus to decide whether we prepare PTs for teaching to new digital native learners. If not, we should revise our lessons to better prepare future teachers. Furthermore, teachers should know how to embrace and integrate technology in their classrooms which should be technologically well-equipped.

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