

THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY
SAKARYA UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE OF EDUCATIONAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

THE IMPACT OF STORYLINE METHOD ON TEEN'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS EFL

A MASTER'S THESIS

KÜBRA AYAZ

SUPERVISOR

PROF. DR. FİRDEVS KARAHAN

JULY 2021

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DECLARATION

In this study which I prepared in accordance with Sakarya University Institute of Educational Sciences, Thesis-Project Writing Guide, I declare:

- I have obtained and presented all the information and documents included in the thesis within the framework of academic and ethical rules,
- I refer to the works I have benefited from and show them as sources,
- I have not made any changes in the data used,
- I do not present all or any part of this thesis as another thesis study.

Kübra AYZ

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I would like to thank everyone who has supported me, believed in me, and helped me throughout this challenging period of my life.

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ABSTRACT

THE IMPACT OF STORYLINE METHOD ON TEEN’S ATTITUDE TOWARDS EFL

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Throughout the language education history, great numbers of teaching methods, approaches and applications had been suggested and experimented with the attempt of presenting a guideline to both the language teachers and the learners to achieve the goal of teaching/learning language effectively. In 1967, Storyline method, a specific pedagogical application of task-based language teaching, emerged in Scotland as the result of the studies of a group of academics in Jordanhill College of Education. Albeit its authenticity, practicality, and meaningfulness, the method has received limited attention so far. The current study aims to investigate this relatively unrecognized approach and its impact on the students’ attitudes towards EFL classes. The study also intends to explore the students’ perceptions of Storyline method. With this purpose the study was conducted involving 7th grade students (15 female and 9 male: 24 in total) at a private secondary school in Sakarya, Turkey. Moreover, the study was carried out in the light of the stages of an action research and conducted as a case study. For triangulation of the data, quantitative results were supported by the qualitative data. The data were collected by means of a pre-test and a post-test (student attitude towards EFL), and a semi-structured open-ended interview. In the quantitative data analysis, means and standard deviations of the responses to the scale items were calculated. Paired sample t-test was utilized to demonstrate whether the students’ attitudes towards English subject showed any significant difference in pre and post-test results. The qualitative data were interpreted in the light of thematic coding. The findings revealed that the students’ overall attitudes towards EFL lessons, the features and importance of English subject and the teacher’s style did not show any significant difference. On the other hand, student’s attitudes towards the content of the lessons showed a significant difference after the implementation of Storyline method. Interview responses showed that

most of the students found Storyline method “enjoyable” and “collaborative”, but some disliked “group work”.

Keywords: Storyline, Task-Based Language Teaching, EFL

ÖZET

STORYLINE METODUNUN GENÇ ÖĞRENCİLERİN İNGİLİZCE DERSİNE KARŞI TUTUMU ÜZERİNDE ETKİSİ

AYAZ, Kübra, Yüksek Lisans Tezi

Danışman: Prof. Dr. Firdevs KARAHAN

Sakarya Üniversitesi, 2021

Dil eğitim tarihi boyunca yabancı dil öğretmenlerine ve öğrencilere etkili bir dil öğrenim sürecinde rehberlik etmesi amacı ile birçok dil öğretim metodu, yaklaşımı ve uygulaması önerilmiş ve denenmiştir. 1967 yılında görev temelli dil öğretiminin özel bir pedagojik uygulaması olan Storyline metodu Jordanhill Eğitim Fakültesindeki bir grup akademisyenin çalışmaları sonucunda İskoçya’da ortaya çıkmıştır. Özgünlüğü, pratikliği ve anlamlılığına rağmen bu metod şimdiye kadar sınırlı ilgi görmüştür. Bu çalışma, nispeten az bilinen yaklaşımı ve yaklaşımın öğrencilerin İngilizce dersine karşı tutumları üzerindeki etkisini araştırmayı amaçlamakla birlikte aynı zamanda öğrencilerin Storyline metodu hakkındaki algılarını tespit etmeyi hedeflemektedir. Bu amaçla tasarlanan yarı deneysel bir çalışma, Sakarya, Türkiye’de bir özel ortaokulda 7. sınıf öğrencileri ile (15 kız, 9 erkek: 24 toplam) yürütülmüştür. Çalışma eylem araştırması prensiplerinin temel alınması ile bir durum çalışması olarak yürütülmüştür. Veri çeşitlenmesinin sağlanması adına, elde edilen nicel sonuçlar, nitel veriler ile desteklenmiştir. Veriler bir ön-test ve son-test (İngilizce dersine karşı öğrenci tutumu) uygulaması ve bir yarı yapılandırılmış görüşme yoluyla toplanmıştır. Nicel verilerin analizinde anket maddelerine verilen yanıtların aritmetik ortalama ve standart sapma değerleri hesaplanmıştır. Uygulama sonrası öğrencilerin İngilizce dersine yönelik tutumlarının ön-test ve son-test sonuçlarında anlamlı bir farklılık gösterip göstermediğini saptamak için bağımlı örneklem t-testi kullanılmıştır. Nitel veriler tematik kodlama yöntemi ile yorumlanmıştır. Bulgular öğrencilerin İngilizce dersine yönelik genel tutumlarının, dersin özellikleri ve önemine ilişkin tutumlarının ve öğretmenin tarzına yönelik tutumlarının anlamlı bir fark göstermediğini ortaya koymuştur. Öte yandan, öğrencilerin ders içeriğine yönelik tutumları, Storyline yönteminin uygulanmasından sonra anlamlı bir farklılık göstermiştir. Görüşme yanıtları, öğrencilerin birçoğunun yöntemi “eglençeli” ve “işbirlikçi”

bulduklarını, ancak seçkisiz oluşturulan uygulama gruplarından hoşlanmadıklarını ortaya çıkartmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Storyline, Görev Temelli Dil Öğretimi, Yabancı Dil Olarak İngilizce

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

During the process of transferring knowledge to the learners, two main concerns come into the picture "what" to teach and "how" to present it. While "what" to teach was primarily concerned in traditional language classes, "how" to teach has come under the light with the adoption of the humanistic approach in the education world (Dörnyei, 2007). Owing to its "lingua franca" status, the English language has gained enormous significance in the globalizing world. As a result, English language education has become one of the priorities of the academic community.

Many language teaching approaches and methods have been developed throughout time to find effective ways to make learners able to use the language as a tool to become global citizens. Task-based Language Teaching (TBLT) has become one of the most favoured ones in the language education area since it gives a chance to "experience the language" (Ellis, 2009) to the learner and a chance to create an authentic learning environment for the teacher. Prabhu developed the approach in Bangalore, Southern India, and its main principle is using the language as a tool while completing a meaningful task. Prabhu believed that students might learn more effectively when their minds are focused on the task rather than the language they are using (Prabhu, 1987; as cited in Littlewood, 2004).

"Storyline" is one of the methods that was developed in the light of promising TBLT. The method integrates the story elements such as plot, setting, characters, and episodes into the sessions hence its title name (Mitchell-Barret, 2010). While practicing the method, a fictional environment is created in the classroom with students working as groups, taking on the roles of characters they create, and they keep these roles throughout the storyline implementation (which might last for several weeks), speaking and writing in role (Ahlquist, 2013). Since TBLT is considered as one of the approaches that have its origins from communicative language teaching principles (Skehan, 2003), storyline method also aims to develop learner capacity to express meaning and use the target language for interaction and problem-solving. Storyline method does not only benefit from TBLT's principles. As the sessions are designed based on a specific plot given by the instructor, it is also possible to observe the shades of

content-based lectures during the sessions. Since it is one of the main principles of the method, the episodes/sessions require task completion as a result of group work. In that way, the method presents the opportunity of creating a cooperative learning environment in the classroom.

1.1 The Statement of The Problem

Teaching to teenagers has always become one of the most challenging concepts for educators from all the subject areas due to the nature of adolescence. *Adolescence* is lexically defined as "the state of development that occurs during the period from puberty to maturity" by Merriam Webster dictionary (Staff, 2004). As Van Aken (1999) indicates, the period of adolescence involves severe changes in terms of the attitudes and social relationships of an individual. With the changes that adolescence brings along, the individual's social needs, motivating factors, and expectations from his/her peers and teacher are remodelled inherently.

Powell (1963, p.174) indicates that a desire for responsibility and an ambition for task completion are some of the specific characteristic features of the age group. TBLT presents a promising educational alternative for that aspiration of teenagers. Powell (1963, p.182) also mentions that teens tend to socialize primarily with their peers, and interaction between peers becomes prioritised in that period. The change of teen's social needs naturally affects the classroom environment and the flow of the lessons and affects their personalities. In their study conducted with high school students, Merç and Subaşı (2015) report that some of the biggest classroom management problems can be listed as "dealing with noise," "lack of participation," "students talking without permission," and "students quarrelling with each other." During the design of a lesson for the age group, all those changes and the needs should be regarded to create an appealing classroom environment and make students willing to participate in the lesson. As a result, commitment to a group, interacting with peers, and achieving a goal by working with "friends" can open the gates of a motivational class for the teen students.

In the light of the main principles of Storyline method, it is possible to observe that the method can be an alternative to promote processual group work and task completion. Moreover, communicative implementation of the method can present convenience to create a teen-friendly classroom environment. Despite the existence of Storyline method since the

late 1960s, there are limited studies on the area in literature. The lack of study is somewhat surprising since the method can be appreciated due to its authenticity, practicality, and meaningfulness. Especially in the Turkish context, just a few studies have been conducted so far in the language teaching context even though the method is quite promising for developing the learner's communicative competence and cooperation skills. Due to the COVID-19 outbreak, like in most of the world countries, students in Turkey have distance education since March 2020. In the online classes, students do not have the opportunity to participate in group-work activities so often due to the teachers' concerns about finishing the curriculum on time, unfamiliarity with EdTech, or classroom management problems. Storyline method can be promising for online education since it may bring a breath of fresh air to students overwhelmed by the COVID-19 pandemic and who missed the activities that require collaboration with their friends.

1.1 Aim of the Study

In the light of previously conducted research in literature, the main objective of the current study is to present an educational model of this specific method by investigating online Storyline sessions and the method's impacts on teen students' attitudes towards EFL classes. Furthermore, the current study aims to explore the students' perceptions of the concept of Storyline method and its online implementation.

1.2 Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated to investigate the Storyline method:

1. Does Storyline method have an impact on teen students' attitudes towards EFL classes?
2. What are the students' perceptions of Storyline method and its online implementation?

1.3 Significance of the Study

Since the Storyline approach aims to make students collaborate in groups to complete a task and get an output together, it promotes students' communicative strategies. Moreover, it provides them a chance to get familiar with the concept of contributing to a group. In that way, it aims to make students ready for the real world's challenges. The current study also contributes to the research in this subject area as there are only a few studies conducted, especially in Turkey. Since the implementation and data collection process was maintained

employing virtual platforms as the education was being conducted online due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the study investigates the impact of online group work sessions and students' positive and negative perceptions of the implementation. In that way, the study provides an educational and pedagogical model for the educators of the technological era by presenting an online adaptation of Storyline method and provides some suggestions about virtual group work implementations with teens.

1.4 Limitations

The current study has several limitations that should be considered for further studies. First, since it is conducted as a case study by a teacher/researcher, the sample is relatively limited. It was also challenging to implement "group work" activities in online education since the virtual platform that the implementation school maintains the online classes (and does not permit other platforms) does not allow to attain groups in one single class link. Another limitation of the study occurs as a result of the formulation of the sample of this study. The 7th-grade students of one institution formed the sample, and the result was not compared to another institution's students.

Moreover, not all the participants are from primary schools of the same institution; therefore, the differences in terms of participant background could not be investigated. Furthermore, differences in attitudes of male and female students could not be investigated since the questionnaire did not require students to indicate their genders to provide confidentiality to the students who are novice participants of virtual education and oversensitive about their online confidentiality. Finally, since all the study participants are from one of the same institution's classes, a control group was not formed because of ethical reasons.

1.5 The List of the Study Abbreviations

CLT: “Communicative Language Teaching”

COVID-19: “Coronavirus Disease of 2019”

EFL: “English as Foreign Language”

ELT: “English Language Teaching”

ESL: “English as Second Language”

ICT: “Information and Communication Technology”

MoNE: “Ministry of National Education”

SPSS: “Statistical Package for the Social Sciences”

TBLT: “Task-Based Language Teaching”

UN: “United Nations”

UNESCO: “United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization”

WHO: “World Health Organisation”

ZPD: “Zone of Proximal Development”

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Storyline Method

2.1.1 The History

Despite the lack of academic study conducted in the area, as stated by Mitchell-Barrett (2010), Storyline Method is a pedagogical approach that dates back to the 60's. The approach was first developed by a team of staff tutors that was led by Steve Bell, Sallie Harkness and Fred Rendell from Jordanhill College of Education, Glasgow, currently known as the Faculty of Education of the University of Strathclyde in Scotland, as a response to *The Primary School in Scotland* memorandum's demand for a curriculum which includes the integration of different subject areas such as geography, history and expressive arts into the primary school curriculum and the promotion of language teaching as language was perceived as crucially important in all its forms (integration of 4 main language skills) (Scottish Education Department, 1965). Moreover, the recommendations of the memorandum were emphasising a more child-centred approach to learning linked with less dependence on the use of improper textbooks (Harkness, 1993). It is possible to deduce that Scottish Education Department was demanding a proper classroom context in which learners would gain the particular skills and concepts while developing a positive attitude towards learning. Bell and Harkness (2006) state that this new method needed to adopt a learner-centred approach, take advantage of the active-learning principles, and promote differentiated group work in the class. With the recognition of the educational theories established by Dewey, Froebel, and Montessori as practical approaches to implement into the existing teaching methods in the 1960's, the staff tutors of Jordanhill College got inspired by the holistic ideas beneath those theories (Bell and Harkness, 1997). The staff tutor group had a chance of working hand in hand with class teachers and other school personnel authoritative for curriculum design (Harkness, 1993). During the 70s, Jordanhill staff organised some workshops to be delivered as in-service courses to teachers. In those workshops, Storyline activities were designed for implementation and development, and the participants were asked to put themselves in the role of the learners (Harkness, 1997, as cited in Mitchell-Barrett, 2010). Bell (2007) states

that the teachers who had included the application of Storyline method in their lessons became senior leaders and headteachers at the Storyline Schools that emerged across Scotland (Bell, 2007).

As a result of the attained success all over the country, Storyline method and its pedagogical philosophy spread around the world. After the recognition of Storyline method in other countries, Jordanhill tutors were invited to other countries to organise workshops and train another generation of Storyline practitioners (Harkness, 1997).

International Storyline conferences which consist of workshops, presentations, and discussions have been held for many years. In November 2000, the first international Storyline conference was held in Aalborg, Denmark, with the attendance of over 300 participants from 22 countries (Storyline Scotland, 2020). Since then, the conferences have been held annually in different countries. The conferences also contribute to the popularity of the approach, and currently, even though the method is mostly favoured in Scotland, the USA, Netherlands, and other Scandinavian countries; numerous other countries such as Turkey, Portugal, Greece, Lithuania, Thailand, Hong Kong use the method as well.

2.1.2 What is Storyline?

Merriam-Webster dictionary explains the word "*story*" as "1) an account of incidents or events" and "2) a fictional narrative shorter than a novel". The approach gets its name from the literary genre since it was designed based on the fundamental components and story flow (Staff, 2004). Letschert (2006, as cited in Mitchell-Barrett, 2010) indicates that in this method, the genre is benefitted to present a meaningful context to the learning. Harkness (2007:20) identifies the approach as a process in which the learners create a setting, invent their own characters, and experience the incidents (plot). *Storyline* in language teaching is defined as a specific form of task-based language teaching (TBLT) by Kocher (2007). The method can be characterised as a product of the philosophies behind the constructivist and social constructivist approaches to education since learners construct their knowledge through dealing with specific tasks and linking their existing knowledge with the presented knowledge (Ahlquist, 2014). This process is facilitated as the learners interact in groups to complete their tasks, as discussed by Falkenberg (as cited in Ahlquist, 2014, p.41). It is possible to label Storyline method as a "humanistic" approach to education since the process of implementation, and the principles of the approach enable the learners to express

themselves and experience the events. Harkness (2007) also emphasises that the method presents an opportunity for learners to get in touch with their feelings while dealing with the realities. Moreover, it creates a suitable environment for the teacher to direct questions regarding moral values and learners to consider their responses and actions.

Creswell (1997, p. 10-12) indicates that the method is composed in the light of 6 main principles created by "The European Association for Educational Design": Story; Anticipation; Teacher's Rope; Ownership; Context; and Structure before Activity.

For the first principle, "Story", Creswell (1997, 2007) states that the method uses the strengths of a story to provide a more comprehensible structure and a meaningful context for acquiring the material required by the curriculum.

For the second principle, "Anticipation", he emphasises the importance of the key question: "What will happen next?". He believes that when the key question arouses the learners' curiosity, they anticipate the burgeoning story, and they contribute to the learning process willingly because they feel a sense of belonging since they are the characters of the story as well.

The third principle Creswell mentions is "The Teacher's Rope". Even if the method adopts a learner-centred approach, Creswell supports the need for a balance between teacher control and learner control in a Storyline topic. He states that Storyline is referred to as collaborative story-making because of the balance between teacher control and student control. (Creswell, 1997, 2007) He states that during the whole process of Storyline, the teacher holds the rope (the plot of the story) to be able to include specific curricular goals, and the rope is unique since it is flexible and allows for numerous bends, twists and knots while moving from one end to the other. In that way, the rope gives learners a sense of control but eventually, they still follow the path the teacher designed and learn the curriculum the teacher had planned (Creswell, 2007).

"Ownership" is the fourth principle that guides a Storyline session, according to Creswell (1997). He states that a well-planned storyline requires the use of learners' background knowledge. Thus, the participants feel responsibility and enthusiasm for taking part in it since they play a substantive role in the process, and they are actively involved in it. He also believes that this principle is the most potent motivator for the learner (Creswell, 2007).

The fifth principle of Storyline is determined as "Context". The method provides learners with a sense of familiarity owing to the authenticity of context that represents real-life situations. As it is stated by Creswell (2007), it is possible to make learners go from known to the unknown by using a predictable structure of the story during the planning of the sessions.

The last component of the method is the "Structure Before Activity" principle. In the light of this principle, to guide the learners in the process of exploring and help them accomplish a particular task, the teacher provides the target structure (e.g., creating a frieze, writing a character's biography, doing research for presentation) of the task before attaining it to the students.

Creswell (2007) compares six main principles of the Storyline approach with the educational ideas of famous American philosopher, psychologist, and educational reformer John Dewey by examining Dewey's "The School and Society" (Dewey, 1902) and "The Child and the Curriculum" (Dewey, 1907) works. As a result, Creswell claims that the similarities between the two philosophies are remarkable, inspirational, and encouraging for today's teachers who include Storyline method in their lessons. He also states that the educational ideas of Dewey and the philosophy of Storyline are both based on careful consideration of learners and structuring learning to meet the learners' needs (Creswell, 2007).

The planning format of a Storyline implementation consists of some critical elements. Harkness lists those essential elements as "Storyline Episode", "Key Questions", "Pupil Activities", "Class Organisation", "Resources", "Learning Outcomes" and "Assessment" (Harkness, 1998, as cited in Mitchell, 2016).

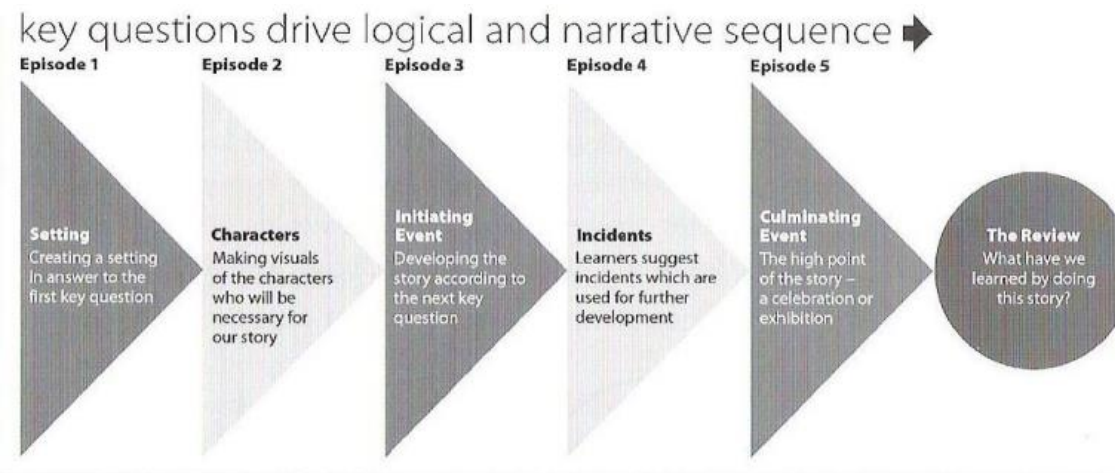


Figure 1. An Example of Episodes in a Storyline from Mitchell-Barret (2010)

Creswell (1997, p.7-8) emphasizes the key elements of a Storyline’s planning format as summarised below:

- “The Storyline begins with a key question.” As it is mentioned in the main principles of the Storyline, the key questions are benefitted to detect the learners’ background knowledge and the gaps in their knowledge that should be compensated.
- “Each Storyline employs a number of key episodes.” As Mitchell (2016) states, the key episodes provide opportunities to cover what students are supposed to learn from the process.
- “A frieze (or display) is created to bring the Storyline to life.” The display is a product of the learner. Learners are the ones who create and develop the frieze in the process of Storyline. The creation process provides the learners encouragement and ownership.
- “Each pupil creates their own character, and a biography is written.” It presents an opportunity to the participants to use their imagination and be whomever they want to be without any limitation and in that way, the learner internalises the learning experience.
- “Incidents occur which involve the characters having to respond and solve problems.” Neatly planned incidents and problems require learners to use their knowledge and reasoning skills to overcome some authentic situations.

- “The Storyline concludes with a celebration or event.” In the celebration element, participants reflect what was learnt/gained from Storyline cycles and it is also possible for teacher to assess the students whether if they achieved the intended outcomes or not.

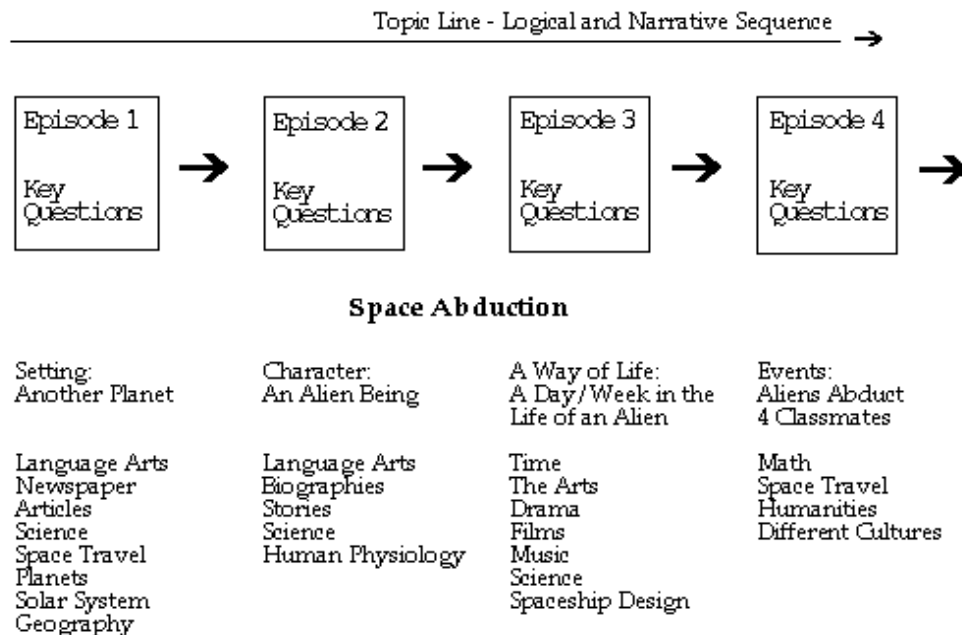


Figure 2. An Example of Topic Line in a Storyline Illustrated by Ian Barr

Retrieved from: <https://sites.google.com/site/constructivism512/Home/definitions-and-theories>

2.1.3 Studies Conducted on Storyline

In Iceland, Björg Eiríksdóttir conducted a preliminary study as a case study in 1995 by observing her 18 ten-year-old students. She and her students worked on the topic "The New Settlers", and it was about the first people who came from Norway to settle in Iceland in the ninth century. As she reported, she worked on the target topic three to four times a week, from twenty minutes to two hours. One of her primary purposes was integrating the teaching of mother tongue (Icelandic) and language skills to environmental studies since it is a tradition in Iceland to inform ten-year-old students about how the country was formed and make them conscious about nature, living animals and settlement of the country. During the process, she kept a teacher/researcher diary to record everything about the sessions. She

collaborated with one of her colleagues who implemented the method with another topic, "Dinosaurs", to her class with fourteen-year-old students and made her colleague keep a diary as well with the aim of comparing two diaries and detecting if the Storyline method would work for another teacher and a different age group. At the end of the process, both groups and their parents answered a questionnaire about their views on the method, and the findings proved that "the Storyline method provides a high degree of motivation", "the method is beneficial for environmental studies", and "parents indicate that the children were interested in the method" (Eiríksdóttir, 1995).

Another comprehensive study was conducted by Rhonda Mitchell-Barrett (2010) in England. Her primary purposes in the study were examining the impact of Storyline method on learners' levels of intrinsic motivation and achieving the pupils' opinions and reflections on the method. She worked with 33 participants, which involve 5th-grade students. As data collection instruments, she benefited from some questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. According to the result of Mitchell-Barrett's study, it was possible to claim that the implementation of Storyline method increased the students' interest, enjoyment, and perceived competence. At the same time, it decreased the sense of tension and pressure. At the end of the study, the interviews showed all the participants stated that they were willing to join in such a project again (Mitchell-Barrett, 2010).

Sharon Ahlquist is another researcher who has contributed to the literature with her valuable studies on Storyline method. In one of her studies, she conducted a five-week case study with 11–13-year-old students in Sweden (Ahlquist 2011). For two hours per day, four days a week, they had Storyline sessions named "Our Sustainable Street" based on the target attainments of the English syllabus. The topic also included interdisciplinary elements and tasks from natural science, social studies, and art classes. Ahlquist reported that she made the learners create their own characters and took on the roles of families who had just moved into a newly built street in a fictive town. The participants worked in groups of four during the sessions. Ahlquist kept a teacher diary for data collection to record her observation notes; conducted interviews with the participants and other teachers at the implementation school; recorded videos and audios; analysed the participants' written Storyline assignments. The findings presented that the pupils described the process of Storyline as "fun", and they enjoyed artwork, imagination, and variety in the sessions. Ahlquist emphasised that

cooperation with peers and working as a group were perceived by many learners as significant factors in their Storyline experience. Ahlquist stated that at the end of the process, the participants were more willing to speak English, and they were able to produce longer and more complex written texts (Ahlquist, 2011).

In 2016, Peter Mitchell conducted a remarkable study with military linguist cadets in Russia to explore whether Storyline positively affects the cadets' EFL learning. The main purpose of the researcher was to develop the students' language skills and increase their motivation by maintaining the language learning process in a contextual and meaningful setting. While most of the studies on the method were maintained with young learners, the sample group of Mitchell's study consisted of adult participants. The students invented a fictive base of a UN military observation mission. The findings of the study showed that the participants had a positive attitude towards the method, and they stated that the method improved their English language skills. It was also possible to claim that the method increased the cadets' motivation and satisfaction with the language education process (Mitchell, 2016).

Another loadstar in the literature for the current study is "Wiki Storyline in Second Language Teaching" (Rimmereide, Blair and Home, 2011). Both studies focus on using Storyline method to teach language skills virtually. The study was conducted with 28 language teachers divided into two groups as an online Storyline project with the aim of developing the participants' second language (L2) competencies by practising receptive and productive skills in English with the help of digital tools such as wiki, blog and Etherpad. It was also an opportunity for the participant language teachers to advance their digital competencies. In the project, a virtual world was created in the wiki, Etherpad was benefited for real time collaborative text editing, and a blog was used for sharing the reflections about the method and the process. The project has great importance since it is the only study in the literature that includes an online application of Storyline method.

Studies show that Storyline method is promising for practitioners as well as learners. Gürol and Keremgil (2012) collaborated with pre-service teachers in the department of Primary School Education of a university in Turkey. A 10-week-long study was conducted to determine the views of pre-service teachers about using Storyline method in social studies classes. Throughout the study, participants were supposed to design weekly lesson plans for the 4th grade "Social Studies" lesson in accordance with the principles of Storyline method

and apply the method in their classes at practice schools. After eight weeks of practice, a focus group interview was conducted with the participants. The findings showed that in terms of the applicability of Storyline method, pre-service teachers reported that the approach was holistic, instructive, learner-centred and fun. It was also emphasised that the method enabled collaborative, cooperative and active learning. Another finding was the improving impact of the method on students' creativity and curiosity. Participants stated that the integration of the method was rather fruitful for the students with different learning styles. Pre-service teachers stated that they found the method more suitable for primary education.

2.2 Principles and Ideas Underlying Storyline Method

2.2.1 Constructivism, Social Constructivism and Zone of Proximal Development

Creswell (1997, p.9) and Ahlquist (2016) state that Storyline method has its roots in the educational philosophies of constructivism and social constructivism since pupils construct their own knowledge and meanings with the help of their personal experiences during the Storyline sessions. Falkenberg (2007) indicates that the method was created under the influence of the ideas of Vygotsky, Dewey, and Piaget. He also states that it is possible to portray teaching as facilitation of the students' learning since the method provides an opportunity for students to realise themselves by constructing their own meanings as constructivism suggests (Falkenberg, 2007, p. 49).

Constructivist psychology dates back to Piaget's works (1896–1980) on his well-known theory of cognitive development. In his studies, Piaget focused on the mental process of constructing meaning concerning the interaction between the individual experiences and ideas (Piaget, 1971). Mascolo and Fischer (2005) define "constructivism" as the philosophical and scientific positions that knowledge arises through a process of active construction. Jonassen (1994, as cited in Kanselaar, 2002) describes a constructivist learning environment with eight pedagogical characteristics:

1. Constructivist learning environment reflects multiple representations of reality.
2. In a constructivist learning environment, oversimplification is avoided, and the natural world's complexity is presented.

3. Constructivist learning environment encourages the construction and creation of knowledge instead of reproduction of knowledge.
4. Authentic tasks are assigned in a meaningful context in constructivist learning environments.
5. Authentic settings are created for the process of constructivist learning.
6. In a constructivist learning environment, learners are encouraged to reflect on their experiences.
7. Contextual and content-based learning strategies are benefited to construct knowledge in constructivist learning environments.
8. Constructivist learning environments promote student collaboration for the construction of knowledge through social interaction instead of competing learners.

When the pedagogical characteristics of constructivism defined by Jonassen and the main approaches of Storyline method are compared, it is possible to see the similarities beneath the ideas of Storyline method and constructivist theory. Kanselaar (2012) states that there are two major historical strands of the constructivist ideology. While one of the strands is "cognitive constructivism"- the one mentioned above-the other is identified as "social constructivism". Social constructivism is derived from the sociocultural perspective in psychology and education. Vygotsky is considered as the father of social constructivism, and he suggests that the construction of knowledge occurs as a result of some social-cultural processes such as social interaction, interpretation and understanding (Vygotsky, 1962). He also supports that cognitive development occurs on a social level at first, and then it can occur within the individual (Vygotsky, 1978, as cited in Amineh and Asl, 2015). According to Kim (2001), it is possible to claim that social constructivism is based on three specific assumptions: reality, knowledge, and learning. For reality, she states that it is not something that already exists in the learning context. Instead, the reality is a product of construction which is done by human activities. She also emphasises that as reality is a product of social invention, it is not something that can be discovered individually, as Piaget suggests. For the second assumption- knowledge- Kim indicates that it is constructed socially and culturally as well. She supports that individuals can create meaning with the help of interaction with others and the context of the environment where they live in. Learning, the last assumption

that Kim states, is perceived as a social process in social constructivism. Meaningful learning occurs as a result of social activities in this assumption (Kim, 2001). When all the assumptions are taken into consideration, it is possible to claim that Storyline method is a product of social constructivism, as Ahlquist (2016) states. Banas (2018) also indicates a strong relation between Storyline method and social constructivist ideas since social constructivism suggests that the outcomes of the students need to be relevant to the learners' actual lives out of the classroom setting and should not be taught explicitly as storyline method recommends.

Macolo and Fischer (2005) indicate that the psychologists who support sociocultural theories and the ideas of Vygotsky state that constructivism which Piaget suggests, ignores the crucial role of social interaction, language, and culture in the development of an individual. Macolo and Fisher also state that children are not perceived as solo actors in the Vygotskian view of constructivism. In this perspective, children work with both adults and peers to construct a developmental process.

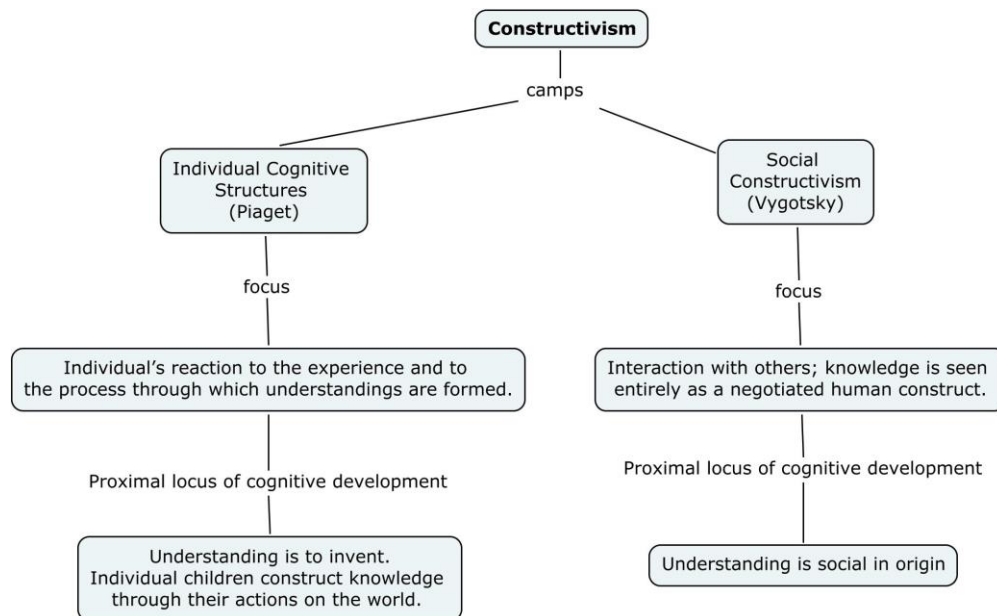


Figure 3. Concept Map of Constructivism

Retrieved on April 20, 2021 from

<https://sites.google.com/site/constructivism512/Home/definitions-and-theorists>

In the light of the social constructivist perspective, Vygotsky introduced the theory of the zone of proximal development (ZPD) in 1978. He defined ZPD as "the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem-solving under adult guidance, or in collaboration with more capable peers" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86).

Wertsch (1989) reports that in the Zone of Proximal Development theory, Vygotsky suggests focusing on the learner's level of potential improvement instead of the actual level of development since the newly gained functions will mature later. The statements of Orehag (2017) on the context of Storyline implementations make it possible to recognise the influence of ZPD on the principles of the method. According to his assertions, in the context of Storyline, the output is a product of working with the student's previous knowledge by relating it with the target attainments and letting pupils decide on the setting and events of the Storyline. In that way, it is possible to increase their interest level and, in extension their language acquisition gradually (Orehag, 2017) On the other hand, Gray's (1997) description of social constructivist environment also indicates that in this context of learning, learners are actively involved, the setting is democratic, and communication becomes crucial in learning. It is possible to observe the similarities between his depiction of the social constructivist environment and Orehag's portrait of Storyline environment.

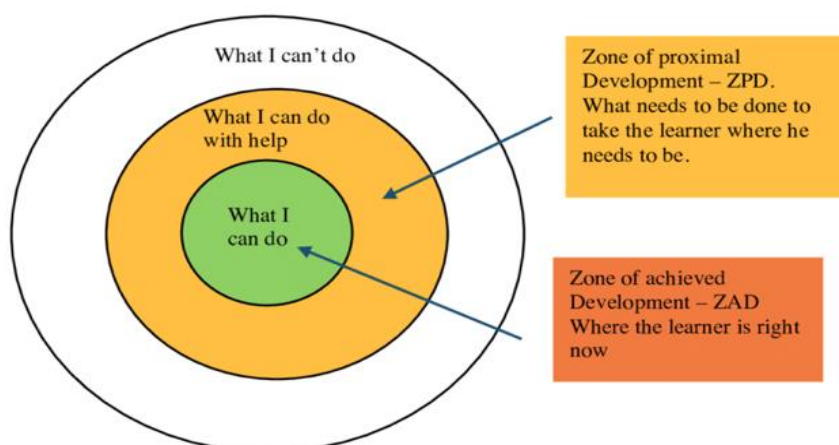


Figure 4. The Circle of Learner Development.

Retrieved on April 25, 2021, from <https://educationaltechnology.net/vygotskys-zone-of-proximal-development-and-scaffolding/>

In 1990, Freund conducted a study with young learners to find out if pupils learn more effectually with the implementation of Piaget's concept of "discovery learning" or by using the guided learning technique, ZPD, of Vygotsky. The results showed that children assisted by "more capable ones" performed better than the children who worked independently.

Amineh and Asl (2015) indicate that in ZPD, the teacher is supposed to be a facilitator for the learner as it is supported by the social constructivist principles of education. Dixon-Krauss (1996, p. 18) also emphasises that according to Vygotskian principles, the role of the teacher is mediating the pupil's learning activities by sharing knowledge through social interaction. As a learning coach, the teacher's duty is to provide support and help and decrease this help gradually. By doing this, the teacher can provide an opportunity for learners to explore the knowledge and construct their own meanings independently.

The support for learning does not only provided by the instructor. As Vygotsky (1978, p.86) stated, collaboration and cooperation with a "more capable peer" can also present backing for the learner. A vast number of studies have been conducted in literature to bring out the potential advantages of peer scaffolding. De Guerrero and Villamil (2000) worked with student pairs for observing the impact of peer-scaffolding on the students' writing skills, and the study proved that with the help of peer correction, the student-writers became more self-regulated and independent while the student-readers advanced their revising, assisting, and collaborating skills in L2 at the end of the process. Another research conducted by Storch (2005) compared the written texts produced by peer-scaffolded students and individual students, and the results showed that peer-scaffolded ones composed shorter but better texts in terms of grammatical accuracy, contextuality, and complexity. Shehadeh (2011) also found out that collaboration and peer scaffolding had a significant effect on the improvement of students' L2 writing skills. On the other hand, the findings of the study showed that discussing with peers to make decisions and organise a paper were also enhancing the participants' speaking skills and self-confidence.

It is possible to claim that ZPD has a substantial impact on the mainframe of Storyline method when both concepts are compared. Banas (2018) indicates that in Storyline method, cooperation has a significant role throughout the process since the pupils are supposed to be engaged in the attained tasks collaboratively, as ZPD suggests. She also emphasises that learners enrich their knowledge linguistically and culturally due to the support provided by

more skilful peers. Thanks to the cooperation between the group members, it becomes possible to observe a higher level of performance from the less sufficient students. Woods et al. (1976, p.90) introduced the term "scaffolding" for this support provided to the learner. He defines *scaffolding* as a process that enables the learner to solve a problem, complete a task, or achieve a goal beyond his/her capabilities without assistance from a more capable one. Copple and Bredekamp (2009) state that scaffolding can be benefited in the classroom context by including modelling the target skill, providing clues or hints to the learners, or adapting an activity/material in accordance with the learners' capacity.

2.2.2 Task Based Language Teaching (TBLT)

Kocher (2007) identifies Storyline as a method grounded in Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) owing to the method's task-centred nature. Skehan (2003) defines TBLT as an approach which constitutes a robust version of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)- one of the basic approaches which are built on goals and processes based on the learner's communicative competence (Savignon, 2002). TBLT is basically defined as "learning by doing" by Nunan (2005).

The "task"- the core element in TBLT- has been defined by many scholars. Ellis (2003, p.16) states that a pedagogical task is a work plan in which the students need to process language pragmatically with the aim of achieving an outcome which can be evaluated in terms of whether the content has been conveyed appropriately or not. He also indicates that the primary concern should be the meaning, and he supports that a task can engage productive or receptive, oral, or written skills. Another definition of a pedagogical task is presented by Nunan (2004) as a piece of classroom product which involves pupils in comprehending, manipulating, creating, or communicating in the target language while the attention is on activating their grammatical schemata with the aim of conveying meaning.

Hao (2017) states the presence of four notable features of TBLT in the light of initiator studies. According to Hao's list, the first remarkable characteristic of TBLT is being harmonious with a learner-centred educational philosophy, which encourages minimal teacher input during the tasks (Skehan, 1996; Ellis, 2003, as cited in Hao, 2017). TBLT is composed of some specific components such as a goal or target outcome in order to remark the successful completion of the task, and this characteristic of the approach is reported as the second notable feature (Skehan, 1996; Nunan, 2005, as cited in Hao, 2017). The third

feature emphasised is the approach's meaning-centred nature to promote natural communicative competence among learners (Skehan, 1996; Littlewood, 2004, as cited in Hao, 2017). And lastly, the fourth characteristic of TBLT stated is that it enables learners to learn through communication and engagement (Prabhu, 1987; Skehan, 1998, as cited in Hao, 2017).

TBLT has its origins from Prabhu's Communicational Teaching Project in India, beginning in 1979, and Prabhu identified three types of task. The first type is declared as "information-gap" activities which aim to transfer some specific information. The second type is named "opinion-gap activities", which require the articulation of an opinion, feeling or preference in a certain situation. The last type of task, according to Prabhu, is "reasoning-gap activities", and the purpose of those activities is to make learners infer and obtain some new information from information given (Mitchell P., 2016)

With the aim of upgrading the benefits of TBLT and establishing a framework for the approach, a three-phase process which includes the "pre-task", "during/while-task" and "post-task" stages was developed by Willis (1996), Gatlinton (1994), and Estaire and Zanon (1994) (as cited in Izadpanah, 2010). Hashemi et al. (2012) explain the primary purpose of the pre-task stage of a TBLT session as making learners ready to perform the main task in ways that will boost the acquisition. Izadpanah (2010) states that the stage introduces the task and arouses interest in performing a task on the target area while activating the topic-related target vocabulary needed to accomplish the main task. Niemeier (2017, p. 23, 34) defines during/while task -the following phase after the completion of the pre-task stage- as the stage in which the pupils realise the task typically in small groups in accordance with the type of the activity. She also indicates that the role of the teacher as an observer or counsellor throughout the task performing stage proves the learner-centred nature of TBLT. At the end of these two stages, the TBLT session is finalised with the implementation of post-task activities. Izadpanah (2010) indicates that the post-task phase aims to present a chance for repetition of the task, to provide an opportunity for the evaluation of the main task and to centre the attention on the target form and problematic area.

Studies conducted present numerous benefits of adopting TBLT. Pietri (2015, as cited in NamazianDost, 2017) examined the effect of TBLT on learners, and he discovered that task-based learning not only encourages pupils to learn and absorb language skills but also

promotes their creativity. When the fictional environment which is created by the students is regarded, it is also possible to observe that Storyline adopts one of TBLT's main purposes to trigger learner creativity.

Increasing learner motivation can be considered as another humanistic outcome of TBLT and Storyline. Zhang and Hung (2013) claim that implementing TBLT, even in crowded classes, increases the learners' motivation to learn and use oral skills. Ellis (2009) also states that TBLT is an intrinsically motivating methodology. In her study, Ahlquist (2012) found out that a Storyline can be an innovative option to make learning amusing for the learners and maintain their motivation throughout the learning process.

Since TBLT and Storyline adopt the "focus on form" principle, it is possible to claim that both meaning and form can be obtained by learners during the sessions. Ellis (2009) also indicates that one of the benefits of taking advantage of TBLT is its nature which does not neglect the form while focusing on the meaning as the primary target area. Similarly, while the main purpose of learners is to convey meaning and produce something with the help of communication between group members, it is also possible to acquire form with the help of the teacher's role as a counsellor and mentor in a Storyline cycle. Peer scaffolding also provides an opportunity to make learners focus on the accuracy of the target form.

There are also differences between TBLT and Storyline method, even if they are based on the same educational principles and implementations. Mitchell (2016) indicates that the main difference between Storyline method and other various forms of TBLT is the cases and the problems presented to be solved within the fictive world created by the learners themselves.

2.2.3 Fiction and Role Play

Role-play is another technique which was adopted by Storyline method. Ahlquist (2011) states that role play is one of the "features" of Storyline. Creswell (1997, p.7-8) also indicates that one of the main components of Storyline method is the creation of a fictional environment and new characters to be employed by the participants throughout the process.

Role-play is defined as "situations in which learners take on the role profiles of specific characters or organisations in a contrived setting" by Wills and McDougal (2009, p.1). They also emphasise that role play is designed fundamentally to create first person experience in safe and promotive environments.

Boudreault (2010) indicates that role-play sessions are rather fruitful for learners from various aspects. One of the benefits of role-play activities, according to Boudreault, is the nature of the activities that provides an opportunity for learners to have meaningful and fluent communication in the target language among their peers. He also states that role-play activities give students a chance to practice and improve their pronunciation and vocabulary skills with the help of interactive implementations. The final benefit which was emphasised by Boudreault is the confidence-building, amicable atmosphere of role-play sessions since the learners can feel comfortable throughout the sessions.

A vast number of studies conducted back up the statements of Boudreault on the benefits of role-play implementations. Richards (1985, as cited in Al-Senaidi, 2010) declares that role-play activities serve for the practice of target language in authentic conversations integrated into different social contexts and roles. In the study aimed the empirical investigation of the effects of "role play" as a TBLT-centred implementation and whether the implementation promotes EFL learner' oral skills conducted by Aliakbari and Jamalvandi (2010), it is reported that communicative role-play tasks enhance the vocabulary of not only young learners but also university students. Besides, according to the study, it is observed that students' speaking anxiety can be reduced utilising role-play activities, and role-play motivates the learners. In a study conducted by Insani (2016) with the participants from a vocational high school, it is also proved that role-play activities have a motivating influence on language learners since the implementation provides an opportunity of building a bridge between theoretical language items and communicative practices. Zakaria et al. (2019) demonstrate that role-play activities are nourishing for the learners' conversational skills, which serve for authentic purposes and real-life situations such as decision making, idea exchanging and meaning negotiation. In the study, it is also stated that with the help of peer interaction during the role-play activities, learners gain self-confidence to express themselves in the target language through modelling of behaviour in the group dynamics. Chen-jun (2006) defines *role-play* as an opportunity to practice the authentic language in a fictional setting in the classroom.

Dinapoli (2009) supports Boudreault's claims on the impact of role-playing on vocabulary and pronunciation skills by emphasising the balancing benefits of role-play implementations on the left-brain focused language production, such as syntax, grammar, and vocabulary. He

indicates that there are further benefits of role-play activities on right-brain focused affective or emotional experiences. Those benefits lead students to combine contradictory ideas in a collaborative task creatively.

It is possible to claim that role-play activities are fruitful not only with adult or teen learners but also with young learners. In a case study on the impacts of Storyline with Swedish young learners, Ahlquist (2011) indicates that the findings of her study report that half of the participants named role-play as one of the most positive features of Storyline.

Besides the typical benefits of role-play implementations, the design of role plays in Storyline method let students create their own unique characters, and it does not restrict the imagination of students since there is no prescribed lines or roles attained throughout the sessions. Furthermore, Waluyo (2019) emphasises that non-scripted role-play activities are relatively beneficial since it provides learners with the opportunity of carrying out conversational issues and practising authentic interactions in the target language. In that way, non-scripted role-play activities give learners better chances to advance their communicative competencies.

2.2.4 Adolescent Learners

In education, learners' age is another crucial factor to be considered since different age groups have distinctive characteristics and needs. Buchanan et al. (1990) indicate that teachers and parents perceive adolescence as a troubled time. World Health Organisation (WHO) defines "adolescence" as the phase of life between childhood and adulthood, between the ages of 10-19 (2020). The age period is described as a stage with rapid and constitutional changes in the child's biology, cognition, and affective behaviours (Lerner and Steinberg, 2009). These changes accompany various alternations in training, education, and employment (Coleman and Roker, 1998). Britannica (2021) states that youngsters encounter abundant not only physiological but also sociological shifts which make them confused about the social norms and expected behaviours during the age of adolescence and summarises the stereotypical characteristics of adolescents as "rebellious, distracted, thoughtless, and daring".

In terms of the shifting perception of identity in adolescence, Markus and Nurius (1986) explain the concept of identity as beyond how teens see themselves. Identity also consists of

"the possible self"- what persons might become and whom they would like to become. In this stage, teenagers begin developing self-esteem as individuals. American Psychological Association (2002) suggests that professionals such as psychologists and educators can support teenagers in developing self-confidence by helping them face a problem head-on instead of running away from it. It is also stated that providing true-to-life activities which make adolescents practice problem-solving skills such as role-plays and tasks that require peer negotiation contributes to the pathway that leads teenagers develop self-esteem a lot. Mucucci (1998, as cited in Santrock, 2001) also endorses that learning to resolve conflict constructively is one of the most critical skills along with recognising and managing emotions, developing empathy and a cooperative spirit for teenagers to master as a part of their affective development. The study also indicated that since the necessity to be a part of groups at this age period is too intense, the great wish to be involved in a specific group can make students actively participate in an activity in which they would not be engaged individually. Larson and Richards (1991) support the enormous impact of peers on adolescent individuals by emphasising the theorists' assertions that drifting apart from parent and prioritising relationships with peers are central and natural developmental projects of adolescence. In that case, educators can take advantage of the peer-connected characteristic of adolescence while planning lessons and designing learning tasks and integrate group work activities in the educational processes. In her study, Kawabata (2019) also states that as an innovative approach, teachers should be encouraged to empower learners by presenting them an option or allowing them to maintain peer-teaching by means of group work. As Bell and Harkness (2006) stated, Storyline method promotes group work and can be promising for teens' social and educational needs.

With the commitment to peers and alienation from parents, adolescents desire to be in touch with their friends even out of school. Beyens, Pouwels, van Driel, Keijsers and Valkenburg (2020) state that in many ways, adolescents are predominant users of the internet, and the internet promotes the intimacy of existing friendships among teenagers. Lenhart, Madden and Hitlin (2005) also indicate that adolescents spend more time online than adults do, and they use the internet most commonly for online communication tools to chat with their peers. Besides maintaining social relationships with the help of the internet, improving online communication and negotiation skills are rather crucial for adolescents' since it is the era of

technology, and adolescence is the period in which youngsters are supposed to begin planning their careers. Sawyer et al. (2018) also indicate that lifetime accomplishments in coping with unemployment, shifting labour-market, and innovative technologies can be promoted by teens acquiring approaches and techniques that support resilience, flexibility, and entrepreneurship.

For the current study, bearing teens' fondness for virtual communication with peers in mind, online Storyline sessions with peers seemed to be effective, and cycles requiring task completion and negotiation with group members were designed for the participants.

2.2.5 COVID-19 Pandemic and Education in Turkey

On the 31st of December 2019, World Health Organisation (WHO) 's China office declared the media announcement made by the Wuhan Municipal Health Commission about the cases of "viral pneumonia" in Wuhan on their official website and on the 9th of January 2020, WHO reported that Chinese scientists have determined the epidemic is caused by an unusual type of coronavirus and one month later, this novel virus named as COVID-19 by WHO. Owing to the increasing numbers of cases, COVID-19 was characterised as a "pandemic" on the 11th of March, and WHO warned all district authorities to maximise their health emergencies. During the first half of 2020, the pandemic has spread all over the world, and governments made various provisions for the drastic impacts of COVID-19, including travel bans, compulsory use of medical masks in public, quarantines across the counties and closures of restaurants, cafes, most importantly, schools.

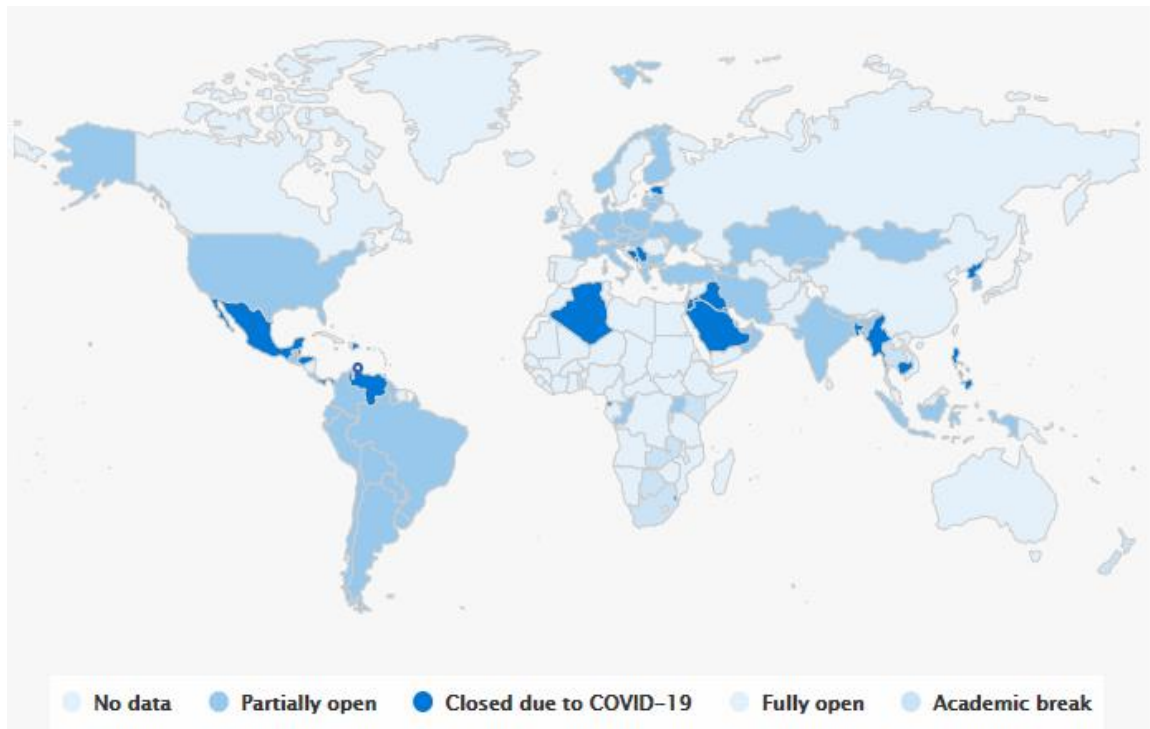


Figure 5. Global Monitoring of School Closures Caused by COVID-19

Retrieved on 25 April, 2021, from <https://en.unesco.org/covid19/educationresponse>

According to the estimations declared by UNESCO (2020), there were 1,5 billion students and 63 million educators were affected by school closures in 188 countries on the 31st of May 2020 (UNESCO, 2020). Even if the numbers decreased in time, there are still 27 country-wide closures and 174,240,920 learners affected in May 2021 (UNESCO, 2021). As a remedy for lockdowns, distance education has been provided through virtual platforms in most countries (ETF, 2020).

The first COVID-19 case in Turkey was announced by the Ministry of Health on the 11th of March 2020 (TRT News, 2020). As emphasised by Özer (2020), the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) has cooperated with the Ministry of Health throughout the process and prioritised the physiologic and psychologic well-being of all academic stakeholders. Just two days after the first COVID-19 case was seen in Turkey, MoNE issued a circular announcing the school closures (Ministry of Education, 2020).

With the school closures in Turkey, many alternative resources and plans were offered by MoNE to ensure the continuity of education. Online platforms and tools have become the fundamental channels to maintain education, and by cooperating with TRT (Turkish Radio and Television Corporation), MoNE launched the online platform – EBA (Educational Informatics Network), assigned some of the teachers working in state schools to record daily lectures for K-12 and provided education via this platform (Özer, 2020).

Besides the opportunities provided by the government and MoNE, some private schools have preferred maintaining their lessons with their teachers interactively via online platforms such as Zoom, Skype, Big Blue Button, TeamViewer and so forth. Within the scope of the current study's implementation school, the lessons were provided through Google Meet.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the methodology of the current study. Throughout the chapter the research design, setting and participants of the study, instruments of data collection and analysis are discussed and the whole process is described in a detailed way. The pilot study that was implemented before the main research was also explained in this section.

3.1 Research Design

The current study aims to investigate the impact of Storyline approach on teens' attitudes towards EFL classes. In addition, the study also intends to explore the students' perceptions of Storyline Approach. As there are only a few studies conducted in the area, especially in the EFL class context in Turkey, a pilot study was conducted before the main study. It took place at another private school in Sakarya, Turkey.

In the pilot study, one of the 7th grades randomly was chosen as the implementation class. 20 participants (11 female, 9 male) were involved in the sessions. In order to introduce the concept of storyline approach to the students, 5-week-long series of sessions, which consisted of 2-hour lessons, were designed and applied to the participants as a part of their EFL lessons in the pilot study. As Ahlquist (2012) suggested, it could be better to let students create their own groups. The participants were allowed to choose their group mates and create a group with five members. In total, four groups were formed in the class as "families" in a neighbourhood. Each family member created a new identity for themselves and became a part of their imaginative families. The same families went through five cycles which included different objectives and competitions among the families. A task-based principle was adopted during the planning of materials and the activities of the cycles as it is planned for the main study. The cycles included both oral and written tasks based on receptive and productive skills. The data came from a structured open-ended questionnaire, a satisfaction scale, and a series of semi-structured interviews. Except for the satisfaction scale, all the data was analysed qualitatively based on the principles of thematic coding. The results revealed that all the students held a positive attitude towards the storyline approach, describing the

storyline approach generally with words such as "fun," "educative," "fostering collaboration," "meaningful."

In the light of the pilot study's finding, a quasi-experimental case study which consists of an implementation group was designed involving all the students in one of the 7th grades of a private middle school. George, Eliopoulos, Harris, Bradham, Baumgarten, Zuckerman, Fink and Perencevich (2004) define quasi-experimental studies as "non-randomised intervention studies" and state that it is usually benefited when it is not achievable or not ethical to conduct a randomised, controlled, simple research design. In the current study, no control group was formed because of ethical reasons and sample quantity. Furthermore, the implementation group was assigned by the school administration. The study was carried out in light of the stages of action research since the current study setting is a natural virtual classroom environment, and the researcher also has the role of the implementation class' EFL teacher. Kuzu (2009) defines *action research* as a method that is actively used by teachers or academicians who take on the role of researchers and is used to obtain information and develop practices in various fields of education systematically and scientifically. A student attitude scale (Appendix 3) was utilised as a pre-test and post-test instrument for the collection of quantitative data. In addition, a semi-structured open-ended participant interview (Appendix 4) was conducted to triangulate the quantitative findings with the support of the qualitative data. All the data collected through virtual tools since the study was maintained during the COVID-19 pandemic, and the implementation school was under a compulsory closure throughout the data collection process.

3.2 Setting

The study was carried out with 7th-grade students at a private middle school in Sakarya, Turkey. There are three 7th grade classes, and the students are placed in these classes in accordance with their English proficiency level, which is measured with a proficiency exam regularly at the beginning of each academic year. Therefore, the implementation was conducted with the class of highest EFL proficiency level students.

As the school policy, 7th graders have 7 hours of EFL lessons per week and the students are obliged to communicate in English with all the EFL teachers even though none of the teachers is native English speakers.

The study was conducted within the scope of weekly EFL lessons, which are provided online by the implementation school because of the official closures of the schools due to the COVID-19 pandemic in the country. In addition, live lectures are conducted five days a week via Google Meet, also known as Google Hangouts Meet. The tool is designed by Google to let numerous people join the same virtual meeting and communicate with each other from anywhere with internet access. Furthermore, the service let the users share videos, audios, visuals with each other, and each participant can share his/her screen with the others (only if the meeting host permits) (John, 2020).

Students participate in the meetings by using their computers, mobile phones, or tablets. Outer problems may occur abruptly during the lectures since some of the students may encounter difficulties because of the devices' functions they use, lack of battery or the internet connection.

3.3 Participants

All the students (15 female, 9 male; 24 in total) in the 7th grades' highest EFL proficiency class took part in the current study. The study was conducted with the highest-level class since the school administration allowed the researcher to conduct the study with this group. The participants are between the ages of 12-14, which means they are adolescent learners. Participants took part in the study voluntarily. Moreover, required permissions were obtained from the governorship and provincial directorate of national education (Appendix 1) and the university ethics committee (Appendix 2) to carry out the study, and the documents are presented in the appendices section.

Table 1.

Demographic Data of the Participants

| Gender | n | % |
|--------|----|------|
| Female | 15 | 62,5 |
| Male | 9 | 37,5 |
| Total | 24 | 100 |

In the table presented above, the numbers of the participants are presented. It can be observed that the number of female students is significantly higher than male students. While collecting the data, the privacy of the participants was taken into consideration.

3.4 Instruments of Data Collection

Next section describes the data collection instruments' specific features in detail.

3.4.1 Attitude Scale for English Lesson

The data regarding the students' attitudes towards EFL lessons were collected through the Attitude Scale for English Lesson. The scale was initially created by Güven and Uzman (2006) for geography lessons. Afterwards, it was adapted to measure the students' attitudes towards English lessons by Anbarlı (2010). Anbarlı's scale was utilised in the study to increase the validity of the data since it is designed in the participants' mother tongue.

The scale consists of 10 positive and 10 negative attitude statements. In order to examine the students' attitudes towards the English course, 5-point Likert type items were utilised (Totally Agree, Agree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Disagree and Totally Disagree). The scale was presented to the students in their native language to ensure that the students comprehend the statements and items. While scoring the scale items, their statements' positive or negative status was considered, and positive attitude statements were scored as 5-4-3-2-1, and negative statements were scored as 1-2-3-4-5. The highest score students can get from the scale is determined as 100, while the lowest score is 20.

The results of the analysis indicated that the reliability of the scale is ,93. In order to determine the validity, a structural validity test was carried out with factor analysis. Accordingly, the items that make up the scale are found to be consistent enough to be included in the scale. The scale consists of three factors, and the factor loadings for the 20 items vary between ,34 and ,71. The scale explains 50.33% of the total variance. In terms of factor loadings, the first factor explains 25.70% of the total variance, the second factor does 13.90%, and the third factor does 10.73%. 11 of the items in the scale (1,2,5,7,8,9,11,16,17,18,20) were clustered in the first factor, 5 of them (4,6,12,15,19) in the second factor and 4 of them (3,10,13,14) in the third factor. When the content of the items examined, it is possible to say that the first factor reflects the attitudes towards the features and importance of the English subject, the second factor demonstrates the attitudes towards

the content of English lessons, and the third factor displays the attitudes towards the teacher's teaching style.

3.4.2 Semi-Structured Open-Ended Interview

McNamara (1999) indicates that interviews can be valuable follow-ups to the data collected through questionnaires, surveys for further qualitative investigation. Creswell (2012, as cited in McNamara, 1999) emphasises that while close-ended interviews may force the interviewee to respond in a specific way, open-ended questions may provide an opportunity to collect unprejudiced responses. To triangulate the data gathered from quantitative data instrument with qualitative findings and understand the students' opinions on the Storyline method better, a semi-structural open-ended interview was implemented as a focus group interview at the end of the process. Dunn (2005, as cited in Clifford et al., 2016, p.145) defines semi-structured interviews as interviews with some degree of prearranged order but still assure resilience in the way issues are addressed by the interviewees. *Focus group interviews* are defined by Clifford et al. (2016) as interviews directed by a facilitator/moderator (which is generally the researcher) and consist of interaction between the participants, which leads them to explore the issue from various angles. The common characteristics between semi-structured interviews and focus group interviews are also emphasised since both allow for an open response beyond the informants' fixed yes/no answers.

In the current study, participants were asked to share their opinions on the Storyline implementations during a one-hour focus group interview. The main question directed to the participants is:

1. What are your thoughts on Storyline method and its online implementation?

3.5 Procedure of Data Collection

All the data were collected online in the current research due to the COVID-19 pandemic and country-wide school closures. Before the implementations of specially designed Storyline cycles, the participants' prior attitudes towards EFL lessons were measured using the Attitude Scale for English Lesson as a pre-test. The participants were assured that their identities would remain anonymous. The pre-test was provided online through Google Documents. Twenty-four hours were allocated for the students to think about the statements

and their responses. After the pre-tests, students were informed about the method and the process they will take part in for six weeks. The participants were also informed that each week's task would be evaluated in accordance with the criteria of a rubric (Appendix 5) provided to them, and there would be a winner group at the end of the process. In total, six forty-minute-long cycles were conducted throughout six weeks. Cycles were designed as follow-up activities for the week's curricular topics. Three groups were formed randomly to familiarise students with each other. In order to form randomly assigned groups, Classdojo group maker tool was utilised.

Since the school policy requires teachers to use Google Meet as the medium of online education, other virtual meeting options were discarded. During the group work sessions, each group's members gathered in another group link attained by the teacher. The teacher was able to join and observe each group concurrently while the participants were working on their projects. At the end of the allocated time for the tasks, all groups were supposed to gather in the main class link and present their projects. All the online lessons are recorded as a school policy. Both the parents and the students are informed about this policy. The projects were evaluated after the cycles by the teacher with the use of the same rubric provided to the students before the cycles. After each cycle, groups sent their projects to the teacher via e-mail to be scored.

After the implementations, the interview was carried out as a focus group interview through a live event held by the teacher on the Slido website at the end of the last cycle. Slido is a QandA and polling platform for live or remote meetings, virtual events, and online classes. Event planners set up the Slido event by designing the theme and entering the questions to be asked. The participants join the conversation with an event code or link. In the tool, participants answer the questions anonymously so that the students in the current study had an opportunity to reflect their thoughts and feelings explicitly without any hesitations. In the interview, students were told to state their opinions on Storyline group work sessions anonymously.

After the collection of semi-structured open-ended interview data, participants were requested to answer the questions on the Attitude Scale for English Lesson one more time as a post-test instrument to finalise the data collection process.

3.5.1 Procedure of Storyline Method Implementation

3.5.1.1 Cycle 1 – Me and My Neighbourhood

The primary purpose of the first cycle was to create the imaginary setting and characters of the Storyline that would be adopted by the participants throughout the upcoming weeks. The target attainment of the first half of the cycle was making the students revise and practice the curricular topics "personal traits", "physical appearance", and "daily life". In this task, students created their character profiles individually by drawing their characters on a paper in the time allocated. After drawing the characters, students wrote the characters' features such as age, profession, personal traits, hobbies, habits around the illustrations of their character's physical appearance. After the creation of characters, randomly formed Storyline groups were announced, and the group meeting links were shared with the students.

The second half of the cycle was designed to make students create relationships by discussing with their group members. The task targeted the oral practice of discussion and presentation skills. Previous studies conducted with students mostly require participants to build imaginary family relationships in the literature. However, in the current study, the participant was free to build any kind of relationship with their group members. The only criterion given was that the group members should live in the same house. This freedom was provided to the participants by considering the traditional family concept which consists of a mother, a father, and the children might be different for each student. Therefore, they might prefer building different kinds of relationships by using their imaginations in this process.

After the group discussions, group members introduced themselves by adopting the role of the characters they created for themselves, and they presented their household by explaining the relationships between the members. At the end of the lesson, the neighbourhood's name was determined with the votes of participants.

3.5.1.2 Cycle 2 – Never-to-be-Forgotten

The target attainment of the second cycle was making students "organise a biography" after the presentations of the week's curricular topic, which was the "biography" genre. At the beginning of the cycle, students gathered on the common class link and the task was explained by the teacher. For the second cycle, the households were requested to write a biography of a well-known person who formerly lived in the same neighbourhood, to be

published in the local neighbourhood magazine. A different character was randomly assigned to each household, and three pictures from the character's childhood, youth, and old age days were provided to the groups. The pictures were chosen meticulously to trigger the students' creativity. During the time allocated for the task, households worked with their group members separately on their previously provided virtual meeting links. When the task time was up, all the groups gathered on the shared link and presented the biographies they had created. After the presentations, the volunteers commented on these three characters and shared what they think about them by adopting their own Storyline roles.

3.5.1.3 Cycle 3 – Our House, Our Value

The purpose of Cycle Three was to make students critically discuss the social and ethical values and write a short persuasive paragraph. Both vocabulary and writing attainments had been introduced during the previous class as a part of the English curriculum. At the beginning of the cycle, all the students gathered on the online link for English class as usual. To revise the concepts and activate the students' minds, a virtual brainstorming session was conducted through Slido. In the brainstorming session, students shared the values which come to their minds at that moment and in that way, by seeing their classmates' responses, students revised the target vocabulary, which would be benefitted throughout the third cycle. After the brainstorming session, students were informed about the cycle's task, which requires households to determine the most appreciated and respected value of their house and write a short, persuasive paragraph to be presented by one of the household members during the neighbourhood night. All of the groups met with their households on their separate links for the group work sessions, discussed a value to be determined as the house value, and organised a persuasive paragraph about the importance of that value. Following the group work session, all of the students came together on the common class link, and the representatives of each house presented the value they had determined.

3.5.1.4 Cycle 4- Dear Municipality...

As for all the cycles, Cycle Four was also designed to make students practise the week's curricular topic, and the target attainment was set as writing a petition letter. In the joint session where all the students were informed about the cycle's task, the neighbourhood map, which consists of an empty area that belongs to the municipality, was presented by the teacher who is in the role of the mayor of Storyline neighbourhood. The mayor announced

that the petitions from the citizens would be evaluated, and one household's suggestion for the construction project would be chosen to be built. During the task session, households discussed in private and organised a petition letter for the municipality by benefiting from the persuasive essay strategies they had practised during the previous cycle's task. At the end of the cycle, each household sent the letters as e-mails to the mayor. After the class, the letters were evaluated by the teacher/mayor according to the rubric's criteria utilised throughout the Storyline. The best project was chosen and announced in the following cycle.

3.5.1.5 Cycle 5- The Sustainable Neighbourhood

Cycle Five was designed as a follow-up activity for the week's curricular topic, "energy". The grammatical target attainment of the week was making suggestions. During the lesson before the cycle, target vocabulary and grammatical unit were presented; the students shared what they do to save energy at their houses and a short video about the sustainable city Copenhagen was watched. For the fifth cycle's task, all the neighbourhood households were invited to create a project to suggest some alternatives to the municipality to achieve a more sustainable neighbourhood. On the household links, students discussed with their groupmates to provide suggestions for creating a sustainable neighbourhood. They organise a list of suggestions by using the target functional unit and vocabulary in the context of energy. At the end of the group work session, each household sent the suggestion letters via e-mail, and they declared their suggestions to the neighbourhood on the shared class link.

3.5.1.6 Cycle 6- Movie Night!

Since one of the characteristics of Storyline is ending the cycles with a celebration, an online movie night was held. When the film is over, the participants commented on the movie and the six-week Storyline. At the end of the party, the household which collected the most point was announced, and they were rewarded with online certificates of appreciation. After that, students were told to state their opinions on Storyline group work sessions anonymously on the virtual Slido interview event held by the teacher. After the collection of open-ended interview data, participants were requested to answer the questions on the Attitude Scale for English Lesson one more time as a post-test instrument to finalise the data collection process.

3.6 Data Analysis

In the current study, the data were collected both qualitatively and quantitatively. The qualitative data collected through participant responses of a semi-structured open-ended interview were analysed by utilising content analysis. The quantitative data collected via a 5-point-Likert type scale were analysed with the help of IBM SPSS 25.0 (Statistical Package for Social Sciences).

3.6.1 Quantitative Data Analysis

Arithmetic mean, standard deviation, and frequency analysis were used to examine the participants' responses in pre-test and post-test. In addition to those analyses, skewness and kurtosis values of both pre-test and post-test were examined (Table 2.) to determine the appropriate tests for the data. Since the results of the analysis indicated that skewness and kurtosis values of both pre-test and post-test were between -1.5 and +1.5, it was acknowledged that the data were distributed normally (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2013, p. 80-81).

Table 2.

Skewness and Kurtosis Values of Pre-Test and Post-Test

| | Pre-Test | Post-Test |
|-----------|----------|-----------|
| N | 24 | 24 |
| \bar{x} | 3.86 | 4.08 |
| Sd | .629 | .520 |
| Skewness | -.086 | -.006 |
| Kurtosis | -1.314 | -.393 |

Also, Buyukozturk (2018, p. 8) indicates that in social sciences, a great number of studies, especially experimental ones, are conducted with smaller samples; therefore, some studies demonstrate there is no significant deviation at "p" significance level when parametric tests are utilised with subgroups consisting of 15 or higher number of participants. Accordingly, in order to analyse and compare the pre-test and post-test results, a paired-sample t-test was

conducted. Taking p-value into consideration as a result of the test, the p-value of $\leq .05$ was expressed as a significant relationship.

The 5-point-Likert type scale was analysed in the light of the ranges recommended by Ovando (1994, as cited in Chanwaiwit, 2018) where "strongly disagree" (1.00-1.80) and "disagree" (1.81-2.60) were classified as "negative"; "neither agree nor disagree" (2.61-3.40) as "neutral"; and "agree" (3.41-4.20) and "strongly agree" (4.21-5.00). In scoring the scale items, the positive or negative status of the statements was considered, and positive attitude statements were scored as 5-4-3-2-1, and negative statements were scored as 1-2-3-4-5.

Table 3.

Classification of Ranges

| Range | Agreement | Classification |
|-----------|-------------------------------|----------------|
| 4.21-5.00 | Strongly Agree | Positive |
| 3.41-4.20 | Agree | |
| 2.61-3.40 | Neither Agree nor Disagree | Neutral |
| 1.81-2.60 | Disagree | Negative |
| 1.00-1.80 | Strongly Disagree | |

Source: Chanwaiwit, P. (2018)

For the analysis of the qualitative data collected from the participants' interview responses, content analysis approach (Dörnyei, 2007) was benefitted. For the content analysis, stages that were emphasised by Creswell (2014) were taken into consideration. At the beginning of the process, the participant responses were transcribed and organised. After the arrangement of the data, it was read several times, and some notes which can lead the researcher to

determine the codes were taken. As the following step, the data were coded thematically with the bottom-up technique.

3.6.2 Qualitative Data Analysis

For the analysis of qualitative data, content analysis method was applied, and the data were analysed under a single theme which was Storyline method since the purpose of qualitative data collection was to find out the attitudes, perceptions, thoughts, and ideas of the students on Storyline method to elaborate the quantitative data which reflects the impact of the method on the participants' attitudes towards EFL lessons. The main theme was coded thematically and divided into sub-codes in accordance with the findings.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

In this chapter, the results of the analyses of quantitative and qualitative data are presented. The first section presents the findings of quantitative data obtained from the Attitude Scale for English Lesson. In the second section, analyses of the qualitative data collected through the semi-structured open ended interview responses are examined.

4.1 Findings of the Pre-Test

The scale consisted of 20 items in total. In Table 4, the result of the pre-test presents the students' attitudes towards EFL lessons before the implementation of Storyline method.

Table 4.

Findings of the Pre-Test

| Item No | Items | \bar{X} | sd |
|---------|---|-----------|-------|
| 1 | I find English lessons boring. | 4.04 | 1.160 |
| 2 | I find English subject more enjoyable than the other lessons. | 3.66 | 1.372 |
| 3 | My teacher's constant criticism repulses me from English lessons. | 4.08 | .974 |
| 4 | I get low scores even if I study a lot. | 4.41 | .503 |
| 5 | English lessons satisfy my curiosity. | 2.91 | 1.282 |
| 6 | I do not want to study English because I forget the topics in a short time. | 3.91 | 1.059 |
| 7 | I love English because I believe that it is useful. | 4.08 | .928 |

| | | | |
|-------|--|------|-------|
| 8 | I study for English lessons because I have to. | 3.79 | 1.284 |
| 9 | I enjoy sharing the things I learn in English lessons with others. | 4.12 | 1.226 |
| 10 | I do not like the way the English lessons are taught. | 3.83 | 1.340 |
| 11 | I like English lessons when current topics are included. | 4.12 | .850 |
| 12 | I have difficulty in understanding the topics in English lessons. | 3.79 | 1.020 |
| 13 | My teacher's friendly attitude attracts my attention. | 4.16 | .916 |
| 14 | I do not want to go to school when I have English class. | 4.41 | .880 |
| 15 | I love English lesson because I am gifted. | 3.50 | 1.215 |
| 16 | I find English lessons meaningless and unnecessary. | 4.50 | .932 |
| 17 | I have great pleasure while studying English. | 3.41 | 1.316 |
| 18 | English is not one of the privileged subjects for me. | 3.83 | 1.203 |
| 19 | I love English lesson because it is easy and understandable. | 3.12 | 1.392 |
| 20 | I look forward to English classes. | 3.54 | 1.284 |
| Total | | 3.86 | .629 |

In the pre-test scores, it is possible to observe that the students' attitudes towards English lesson were already positive since the total mean was between 3.41-4.20 ($\bar{X} = 3.86$) which was classified as "positive" attitude in the current study. Following that, the second item ($\bar{X} = 3.66$) demonstrated that most of the students found English subject more enjoyable than the others. The responses for item 7 ($\bar{X} = 4.08$) indicated that students commonly agreed on

the usefulness of English lessons. In item 9 ($\bar{X} = 4.12$), it was pointed out that students enjoyed sharing new things they learnt during English lessons with the others, and they loved the inclusion of up-to-date topics into English lesson according to item 11 ($\bar{X} = 4.12$). In item 13 ($\bar{X} = 4.16$) it was observed that the students had positive attitudes towards English lesson owing to the teacher's friendly attitude. According to item 15 ($\bar{X} = 3.50$), it is possible to state that the students mostly thought they were talented in English and they like the lesson because of it. Moreover, according to item 17 ($\bar{X} = 3.41$), students enjoyed studying for the English lesson. It was observed that the participants were enthusiastic for the upcoming lessons when item 20 ($\bar{X} = 3.54$) was taken into consideration.

In item 5 ($\bar{X} = 2.91$), it was presented that the participants neither agreed nor disagreed on whether English lessons satisfied their English curiosity, and it showed that they had a neutral attitude towards item 5 since the mean was between 2.61-3.40. Students also showed a neutral attitude towards item 19 ($\bar{X} = 3.12$) since they neither agreed nor disagreed on English lesson's easiness made them love the lesson.

Since the negative items were coded in reverse (1 = strongly agree, 2 = agree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 4 = disagree, 5 = strongly disagree), when negative items were examined, the first item ($\bar{X} = 4.04$) showed that students did not perceive English lesson as a boring school subject. The responses for the third item ($\bar{X} = 4.08$) showed that students did not think there was a constant criticism from the teacher which made them reluctant for the lessons. Item 4 ($\bar{X} = 4.41$) revealed that most of the participants strongly agreed on English was not a lesson in which no matter how the students' efforts, they get low scores. By means of the student responses for item 6 ($\bar{X} = 3.91$), it was concluded that most of the participants thought English was not a subject they did not want to study because they forget the topics in a short time. From item 8 ($\bar{X} = 3.79$) responses, it was observed that the students were not studying for English lessons just because they had to do. Student's existing attitudes towards the style of teaching was indicated with item 10 ($\bar{X} = 3.83$) and it is possible to say that most of the students were not complainant. From item 12 ($\bar{X} = 3.79$), it was understood that most of the students in the class did not have difficulty in understanding the topics presented during the lesson. Item 14 ($\bar{X} = 4.41$) results showed that the participants did not have a tendency of evading from English lessons by not going to school on the days when there is English lesson and most of the students strongly agreed on the necessity and purposefulness of English

lesson according to item 16 ($\bar{X} = 4.50$). In the light of the responses to item 18 ($\bar{X} = 3.83$), it is possible to state that English had already been one of the privileged lessons for most of the participants before the Storyline implementations.

4.2 Findings of the Post-Test

In Table 5. the result of the post-test presents the students' attitudes towards EFL lessons after the implementation of Storyline method.

Table 5.

Findings of the Post-Test

| Item No | Items | \bar{X} | sd |
|---------|---|-----------|-------|
| 1 | I find English lessons boring. | 4.25 | .846 |
| 2 | I find English subject more enjoyable than the other lessons. | 3.58 | 1.138 |
| 3 | My teacher's constant criticism repulses me from English lessons. | 4.04 | 1.160 |
| 4 | I get low scores even if I study a lot. | 4.54 | .832 |
| 5 | English lessons satisfy my curiosity. | 3.66 | 1.049 |
| 6 | I do not want to study English because I forget the topics in a short time. | 4.25 | 1.224 |
| 7 | I love English because I believe that it is useful. | 4.20 | 1.178 |
| 8 | I study for English lessons because I have to. | 4.00 | 1.142 |
| 9 | I enjoy sharing the things I learn in English lessons with others. | 4.20 | .832 |
| 10 | I do not like the way the English lessons are taught. | 3.87 | 1.191 |

| | | | |
|-------|---|------|-------|
| 11 | I like English lessons when current topics are included. | 4.08 | 1.138 |
| 12 | I have difficulty in understanding the topics in English lessons. | 4.04 | 1.160 |
| 13 | My teacher's friendly attitude attracts my attention. | 4.29 | 1.041 |
| 14 | I do not want to go to school when I have English class. | 4.58 | .775 |
| 15 | I love English lesson because I am gifted. | 3.91 | 1.212 |
| 16 | I find English lessons meaningless and unnecessary. | 4.62 | .769 |
| 17 | I have great pleasure while studying English. | 3.70 | 1.160 |
| 18 | English is not one of the privileged subjects for me. | 3.87 | 1.115 |
| 19 | I love English lesson because it is easy and understandable. | 4.12 | 1.034 |
| 20 | I look forward to English classes. | 3.79 | 1.102 |
| Total | | 4.08 | .520 |

In the post-test scores, it is possible to observe that the students' attitudes towards English lesson are positive since the total mean was between 3.41-4.20 ($\bar{X} = 4.08$) which was classified as "positive" attitude in the current study. When the findings of post-test were examined, it can be stated that no major changes occurred in the student responses since the participants' attitudes towards English lesson had already been positive according to the pre-test results. On the other hand, in the pre-test, student responses of item 5 ($\bar{X} = 2.91$) and 19 ($\bar{X} = 3.12$) were found to be neutral however the post-test results indicated higher means for both item 5 ($\bar{X} = 3.66$) and 19 ($\bar{X} = 4.12$) which were classified as "positive" attitude in the current research.

When the positive items were examined, the mean of responses to the second item ($\bar{X} = 3.58$) showed that most of the students found English subject more entertaining than the others and it was also observed that students mostly agreed on the practicality of English according to item 7 ($\bar{X} = 4.20$). Responses for item 9 ($\bar{X} = 4.20$) demonstrated that students liked sharing the things they learnt during English lessons with others. According to the findings collected via item 11 ($\bar{X} = 4.08$), it could be observed that most of the students were getting more interested in the lesson when current topics were presented. From the student responses to item 13 ($\bar{X} = 4.29$), it was found out that the teacher's amiable posture attracts the students' attention during the lessons. Responses of item 15 ($\bar{X} = 3.91$) showed that students mostly thought they love English subject since they are gifted in it. According to the results collected through item 17 ($\bar{X} = 3.70$), most of the students stated they enjoyed studying English. Lastly, it was observed that students were mostly enthusiastic for the upcoming English classes according to the responses of item 20 ($\bar{X} = 3.79$).

When the positive items in the post-test were reviewed, the responses of the first item ($\bar{X} = 4.25$) showed that most of the students strongly agreed on English lessons were not boring. According to findings from the third item ($\bar{X} = 4.04$), it is possible to say that teacher criticism was not a matter which repulsed the students from English lessons. Item 4 ($\bar{X} = 4.54$) results revealed that most of the participants strongly agreed on English was not a lesson in which they get low scores even if they study a lot. Participant responses to item 6 ($\bar{X} = 4.25$) demonstrated that English was not a subject that the students were reluctant to study for since the information gained from the lessons was forgotten easily. In the light of item 8 ($\bar{X} = 4.00$) it is also possible to observe that the students did not study for English subject unwillingly just because they had an obligation or responsibility. In addition to that, student responses to item 10 ($\bar{X} = 3.87$) showed that the participants did not have negative attitudes towards the teaching style of the teacher. In item 12 ($\bar{X} = 4.04$), most of the students agreed on they had no difficulty in understanding the topics of English lessons. Moreover, Item 14 ($\bar{X} = 4.58$) findings showed that students did not have any reluctance to go to school on the days they have English class. Most of the participants also strongly disagreed on English was meaningless and unnecessary according to item 16 ($\bar{X} = 4.62$). Finally, responses of item 18 ($\bar{X} = 3.87$) demonstrated that students mostly perceived English as one of the privileged subjects.

4.3 Comparison of Pre-Test and Post-Test Results

In Table 6, changes in the participants' attitudes towards English lessons after the implementation of Storyline method was examined through the comparison of pre-test and post-test results.

Table 6.

Comparison of Pre and Post Test Scores

| | N | \bar{X} | sd | df | t | p |
|-----------|----|-----------|------|----|--------|------|
| Pre-test | 24 | 3.86 | .629 | 23 | -1.334 | .195 |
| Post-test | 24 | 4.08 | .520 | | | |

p < .05

As Table 6 demonstrates, although there is a difference between pre-test ($\bar{X} = 3.86$) and post-test ($\bar{X} = 4.08$) mean scores, the difference is not significant according to the analysis result.

Besides the overall change in the participants' attitudes towards EFL lessons, pre-test and post-test results were examined in terms of the changes in three factors of the scale which were determined as "general features and importance", "content" and "teacher's style".

4.4 Comparison of Responses on the General Features and Importance of English Subject

After the examination of pre-test and post-test results, each factor in the scale was analysed and compared. Table 7 displays the comparison of pre-test and post-test findings from the point of factor 1, "general features and importance".

Table 7.

Comparison of Students' Attitudes Towards the General Features and Importance of English Subject

| Factor | | N | \bar{X} | sd | df | t | p |
|---------------------------------|-----------|----|-----------|------|----|-------|------|
| General Features and Importance | Pre-test | 24 | 3.82 | .799 | 23 | -.919 | .368 |
| | Post-test | 24 | 4.00 | .627 | | | |

$p < .05$

As table 7 illustrates, although there is a difference between pre-test ($\bar{X} = 3.82$) and post-test ($\bar{X} = 4.00$) mean scores in terms of the first factor which reflects the participants' attitudes towards "general features and importance" of English subject, the difference was not found to be significant according to the analysis results [$t_{(23)} = -.919$; $p > .05$].

4.5 Comparison of Responses on the Content of English Lessons

The second factor in the scale was examining the participants' attitudes towards the content of English lessons. The comparison between pre-test and post test results of the participants in terms of the second factor is demonstrated in Table 8.

Table 8.

Comparison of Students' Attitudes Towards the Content of English Lessons

| Factor | | N | \bar{X} | sd | df | t | p |
|---------|-----------|----|-----------|------|----|--------|------|
| Content | Pre-test | 24 | 3.75 | .602 | 23 | -2.105 | .046 |
| | Post-test | 24 | 4.17 | .723 | | | |

$p < .05$

In Table 8, when the results of pre-test ($\bar{X} = 3.75$). and post-test ($\bar{X} = 4.17$) are compared, it is possible to observe an increase in the students' attitudes towards the content of English lessons after the implementation of Storyline method. After the analysis, the difference found to be significant [$t_{(23)} = -2.105$; $p < .05$].

4.6 Comparison of Responses on the Teacher's Style

The last factor measured in the scale was the students' attitudes towards the teacher's style. In Table 9, comparison of pre-test ($\bar{X} = 4.12$) and post-test ($\bar{X} = 4.19$) results shows that even if there is an increase in the participants' attitudes towards the teacher's style after the implementations, the difference is not significant [$t_{(23)} = -.416$; $p > .05$].

Table 9.

Comparison of Students' Attitudes Towards the Teacher's Style

| Factor | | N | \bar{X} | sd | df | t | p |
|-----------------|-----------|----|-----------|------|----|-------|------|
| Teacher's Style | Pre-test | 24 | 4.12 | .733 | 23 | -.416 | .681 |
| | Post-test | 24 | 4.19 | .667 | | | |

$p < .05$

4.7 Findings of the Qualitative Data

The qualitative data collected through the semi-structured open-ended interview was transcribed and coded into two main categories as "positive" and "negative". Under these codes, 7 positive and 5 negative sub-codes were extracted from the transcription of the interview. In total, students used positive statements ($f = 52$) more than negative remarks ($f = 23$). The transcription of interview responses can be found in Appendix 4.

Table 10.

Students' Perceptions of Storyline Implementation

| Theme | Code(s) | Sub-code(s) | f |
|---------------------------|--------------------|---|----|
| Storyline Implementation | Positive (f:52) | Enjoyable | 13 |
| | | Collaboration | 12 |
| | | Contributes to the comprehension of the subjects and vocabulary | 8 |
| | | Creativity | 7 |
| | | Good | 7 |
| | | Contributes to the improvements of practical and real-life skills | 4 |
| | | Teacher's style | 1 |
| | Negative (f:23) | Group work | 11 |
| | | Boring | 6 |
| | | Quarrels | 3 |
| Could be better at school | | 2 | |
| | | Confusing | 1 |

In the light of Table 10, it is possible to observe that some students indicated that the implementation was “good” (f = 7) in general, and many participants believed that the process of implementation was “enjoyable” (f = 13).

“After these fun sessions, I love English more.”

“Collaboration” (f = 12) was another positive factor highlighted by the students.

“I love group projects :)”

“I could work with my friends more in the distance education, this is good.”

“group is good BRUH.”

“I love it because I love group works but some didn't participate in the projects a lot. I don't know why...”

“I can't write anything in English, but my group mates helped me improve my skills.”

The imaginary setting which was one of the main features of the method was also emphasised by the participants and “creativity” (f = 7) was determined as another sub-code.

“like having an imaginary neighbourhood.”

“It improved my imagination.”

“I like imaginary neighbourhood idea and the project.”

“I like having new characters and being households.”

Some students indicated that they found the method fun owing to its collaborative and creative nature.

“I enjoyed role-plays and character creation.”

“I think it was fun because of imaginary characters and households we created, I love my group.”

“I think group works are very enjoyable because we cannot have activities like this in distance education.”

I worked with my friends and we made some jokes and we had fun. We learnt so much from each other, I love group works.”

“I think that the group works were great because I love my group, they are smart and hardworking students (3 of them) and we really behave carefully for our projects.”

“long story short I enjoyed the group tasks and I am waiting for new group works :)”

“...but it's fun in a way thanks to the Storyline characters and setting.”

“I think group work teaches us something. I love it because it is fun, and I love my group.”

“I love my household because my friends are trying their bests (except some ones) and we usually had fun.”

Some participants also mentioned that the implementation of Storyline method “contributed to the comprehension of the subjects and vocabulary” (f = 8). The method's contribution to

the participants' "improvement of practical and real-life skills" (f = 4) was another factor mentioned during the interview.

"I think group tasks were really good for learning English and friendship."

"It contributed to my comprehension much better than the regular lessons."

"I remembered the words I learnt from my friends during the tasks better."

"Lessons are enjoyable, I'm learning lots of new words and new perspectives and so it's important."

"It is important for our future, we should be able to work with everybody we like or dislike, it teaches us so many things I love group projects :)"

"And group projects are important for education life. "

"It is good for improving writing skills."

"I think it was a good method, there were good activities I like it because i love coding and generally coding schools give their students assignments like projects, not tests or anything, and generally projects have to be done with some friends. It is not easy to make a project without someone/some people."

One of the participants also stated that the "teacher's style" (f = 1) had a positive impact on the students during the cycles.

"I like the lessons because of you miss <3"

On the other hand, while many students indicated the positive effects of group work sessions and collaboration, negative thoughts on the "group work" (f = 11) were stated by some of the participants.

"I don't like the lessons just because of these group works."

"I hate groups!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!"

"I didn't like group work. I think we should choose our group friends."

"personal studies can be more beneficial than random groups."

"what can I do if I hate my group friends >:)"

"if we could choose our household, it would be better."

"I learnt studying with a group but i don't like it 😞"

“but I think there could be other homework or activities instead of group work because we couldn’t agree during some tasks. that’s my opinion but it was good.”

It was also emphasised that the completion of group tasks caused “quarrels” (f = 3) and it made the participants feel stressed.

“In group projects we had quarrels and I didn’t like “

“it made us fight during production, I don’t like it.”

“fun but stressful because of the fights...”

Some students found the implementation “boring” (f = 6).

“Sometimes it was enjoyable but sometimes boring.”

“I didn’t have fun in group work bc it’s so boring it was not useful for me”

“it good for improving writing skills but it’s boring.”

“group work is nice but boring.”

“I don’t like writing; it is boring but its obligatory.”

Some students criticised the online implementation of the method and stated that “it could be better at school” (f = 2).

“It could be better at school.”

“I think, maybe in face to face it could be better..”

Another student stated that the implementation and the tasks were “confusing” (f = 1).

“It was confusing for me...”

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION, DISCUSSION, AND SUGGESTIONS

In this section, the whole progress in the current study will be concluded; the primary data obtained from the comparison of pre-test and post-test results regarding the impacts of Storyline method on teen students' attitudes towards EFL lessons will be summarised and discussed within the framework of research questions by referring to previous studies. Also, qualitative data collected through participants' responses to the interview question will be examined in light of relevant literature. Lastly, some suggestions will be offered for further research in light of the findings and limitations of the current study.

5.1 Conclusion and Discussion

In the current study, the impacts of Storyline method on teen students' attitudes towards EFL classes were investigated, and the students' perceptions of Storyline method were questioned. Regarding that there is an undeniable human factor in social sciences, quantitative findings were supported with qualitative data collected through participant responses (Appendix 4).

In the current study, following research questions were formulated to investigate the Storyline method:

1. Does Storyline method have an impact on teen students' attitudes towards EFL classes?
2. What are the students' perceptions of Storyline method and its online implementation?

The study was set out to investigate two main questions, and the first question was designed to be examined mainly in the light of quantitative data, while the second research question was investigated with the support of qualitative data.

Regarding the quantitative data, even if there was a difference between pre-test and post-test scores in the students' overall attitudes towards online EFL lessons, the difference was not found to be significant. On the other hand, examination of the qualitative data showed that the positive responses ($f = 52$) were superior to the negative ones ($f = 23$) (Table 10). When

related literature was investigated, it is possible to observe that Storyline had a positive impact on most of the participants' attitude, creativity, motivation, academic achievement, and social skills even when there are some sceptical or negative ones in the minority (Eiriksdottir, 1995; Yiğit and Erdoğan, 2008; Brox and Ghezzi, 2010; Alebiosu, 2012; Budlova, 2014; Róg, 2014; Toy and Akpınar, 2020). In the current study, there might be various factors that led to this result. Table 4 demonstrates that the participants' existing attitudes towards EFL lessons had already been positive before the Storyline sessions. It can be one of the possible reasons behind the insignificant difference after the implementation of the method. During the focus group interview, one of the participants directly stated that s/he liked EFL lessons more before the Storyline sessions, on the other hand, it is possible to observe that even in the negative utterances, some students qualified the method as "good" ($f = 7$) in general.

Since the scale consisted of three factors, changes in student attitudes towards each factor were analysed independently. When the findings were examined, no significant difference was found in the first factor, which reflects the student attitudes towards the features and importance of English subject. Table 7 also demonstrates that the participants showed a positive attitude towards the importance of the EFL lessons and general features of the EFL classes before the Storyline sessions. The setting of the study may have an impact on the students' positive attitudes towards EFL before the Storyline since the implementation school is a private school that prioritises foreign language education. As a school policy, 5th grade is considered EFL preparatory class, and the students have 14 hours of EFL classes per week. In the 6th and 7th grade, students have 7 hours of EFL. Though the class hours allotted to EFL are relatively less than 5th grade, it is still more than state schools in which students have 2 to 5 hours of EFL classes (MoNE, 2020). Ayaz (2020) also found out that class hours and exposure to the target language may significantly impact the students' perceptions and attitudes. Materials that are benefited from in the EFL classes might be another factor as the textbooks are chosen neatly by a committee consists of the EFL teachers at the implementation school and scholars from the ELT department of Sakarya University. Authentic contents of the books, methods utilised for the presentation of the content, inclusion of 21st century skills-based texts and fun activities can be regarded as some of the

criteria taken into consideration in the book selection. Breen (1985) also indicates that authentic materials affect the students' attitude and motivation towards the subject.

Another factor that the participants had already shown a positive attitude towards before the implementation of the method was the EFL teacher's teaching style and approach, which was also the third factor examined in the attitude scale. In Table 9, it is possible to observe that the participant attitudes towards the teacher's style did not show any significant difference after the implementation of Storyline method since their existent attitude means were also relatively high. However, their positive attitudes towards the teacher might influence their overall attitudes towards EFL classes prior to the study. Uluğ, Özden and Eryılmaz (2011) found out that teacher of the subject can affect the students' academic performance levels and attitudes towards the subject both positively and negatively. In the implementation school, teachers are also hired neatly after the conduction of a set of interviews and the implementations of demo lectures. Moreover, the teachers at the school are required to prepare weekly lesson plans, which include fun and creative activities and tasks for the students and send it to the school administration regularly. It is possible to mention that this may also positively influence the students' pre-attitudes towards the teacher and the lesson. After the implementations, just one of the participants specifically emphasised that s/he likes the lessons because of the teacher during the focus group interview.

On the other hand, Table 10 displays that some students made some negative statements about the Storyline implementation during the interview. Participant's negative perceptions of the method may be another factor that caused the absence of significant difference in their overall attitudes towards EFL lessons and the attitudes towards the features and importance of the lessons. Although there were positive comments on "collaboration" and "cooperation", there were negative statements on "group work" as well. The most common negative comment stated by the students was labelled as "group work" ($f = 11$). When the responses are examined, it is possible to interpret negative responses on group work showed that the main reason behind those comments was the conflicts between group members and the groups' random assignment. Three students expressly indicated that the tasks caused quarrels between the group members. It was also observed that even some of the positive statements on the method's creative and collaborative nature uttered by the participants were overshadowed by the negative impact of the group members. Ahlquist (2011, 2013) also

indicates the emergence of similar complaints in her studies. According to her statements, some of the groups in her study had difficulty during the tasks that require collaboration due to the domination by some members, withdrawal by others, abnegation of some students, disagreements, and unwillingness to reconcile these conflicts (Ahlquist, 2013). In the current study, one student also questioned why people (groupmates) think if someone's English is good, s/he will be the one who does everything in the group and complained about withdrawal and abnegation. Ahlquist also stated that how groups behaved changed from one cycle to another in direct proportion to the disagreements between the group members. One of the participants in Ahlquist's study stated that s/he learnt working as a group thanks to the method, but s/he did not like it and did not want to work as a group (2011). One very similar statement was uttered by a participant of the current study as well: "*I learnt studying with a group, but I don't like it 😞*". It is possible to observe that in both studies, the participants were aware of the importance of cooperation and the method's benefit of acquisition of collaborative skills, but due to the disagreements between the group members, they placed the method's cooperative nature behind the conflicts. The participants in both studies are in almost the same age range. In a study with very young learners or adults, these kinds of problems might not occur and letting students formulate their own groups could be another possible solution for these kinds of complaints.

On the other hand, there were relatively positive statements that favoured group work sessions. Some participants responded to their friends' negative comments with counter statements, and some of them emphasised the positive impacts of the collaborative nature of Storyline method ($f = 12$) and indicated that thanks to peer-scaffolding, they enhanced their weaker skills. Banas (2018) also questioned some novice teachers' perceptions of Storyline method. Most of the participants indicated that the method provided opportunities for meaningful communication, peer collaboration, and contextual practice of language skills through group work. It was also stated by some of the teachers that it might increase motivation and self-esteem. In Rimmereide (2010), it was found out that participants mostly favoured the opportunity of benefiting from more formal peer feedback throughout the oral and written tasks. Syfari and Wulandari (2013) also stated that Storyline implementation promoted the learners' awareness of teamwork and taught learners to be tolerant by making them negotiate when everyone does not agree on a particular opinion.

By some participants of the current research, it was also indicated that the group tasks contributed to the development of their practical, real-life skills ($f = 4$). From the comments which reward the method's support for the enhancement of authentic and professional skills, it can be inferred that the participants are concerned about their future and professional development. The age range of the implementation group might have an impact on their perceptions of Storyline group tasks. Since the implementation group consisted of teen students, it is possible to interpret the responses as some of the participants showed an awareness of career development. Sawyer, Azzopardi, Wickremarathne and Patton (2018) emphasise that teens should be aware that they can promote their professional development by acquiring real-life business skills. Some of the participants seem to be conscious of the importance of equipping themselves with professional skills for their career development. In the 21st century, digital literacy is seemed to be one of the most crucial professional skills. Banas (2018) conducted a study in which Storyline was implemented online. She stated that participants' digital literacy contributed to integrating English into the participants' professional training since digital competence involves comprehending virtual tools and online etiquette necessary to be involved in modern society. Other than digital literacy, there are some essential business skills that teenagers need to be proficient such as networking, problem-solving, decision making for successful career management. Budlova (2014) found out that Storyline is a method that can be benefitted from to promote foreign language learner's professional skills such as note-taking, creative thinking, discussion, and negotiation. Lundström and Ljung (2010) indicated that Storyline sessions made students appreciate the development of social and professional skills such as public speaking, mounting an argument, problem-solving, and creative thinking. In the study, it is emphasised that Storyline provides learners with an opportunity to practice topic-related vocabulary and behave verbally and non-verbally according to social circumstances. A similar result was found by Yaralı and Aytar (2020). In their study, an increase was observed in the students total scores of the critical thinking skills test after the implementation of Storyline method. As it can be observed from the student responses, the class clashed over the effectiveness of group work and the numbers of positive ($f = 12$) and negative ($f = 11$) comments on the group work sessions were found to be almost equal. This result can be one reason for the absence of significant difference in students' overall attitudes towards EFL lessons and the

attitudes towards the general features and importance of the lessons, albeit the existence of positive statements.

In the current study, students also implied that they had an opportunity to communicate and collaborate with their friends more thanks to the online Storyline sessions. It was also highlighted by some students that Storyline sessions were fun ($f = 13$), and it had an embellishing effect on the monotony of distance education. Notwithstanding the foregoing, another negative comment uttered by some of the participants was "boring" ($f = 8$). The vapidness of the implementation could be considered as one of the reasons which led to this statement. However, Table 10 demonstrates that the "boring" statement is contradicting with the most frequent positive statement, which is "enjoyable" ($f = 13$). Lundström and Ljung (2010) stated that in their study with 8th graders, none of the participants came up with a statement that implied the implementation of the method was tedious, and almost all of the students qualified Storyline sessions "fun". There might be diverse reasons behind this comment. First of all, the most frequent negative factor, "group work," can be one of the reasons behind the students' boredom since it was reported by the students that some disagreements and quarrels occurred during the task completion sessions. When the statements were examined, it is possible to observe that some participants suggested a face-to-face implementation of the method. All the implementation and data collection processes were carried out online due to the COVID-19 pandemic and official school closures in Turkey; thus, online implementation of Storyline might be another possible reason why students got bored. In addition, the digital literacy levels of the students might cause different perceptions of online Storyline implementation. Rimmereide (2011) also indicated that in the online implementation of Storyline method, while some students feel confident and willing to use technology, some may not feel entirely competent for maintain online sessions and projects. There were some participants who stated that the sessions were "confusing" or "difficult". Using online tools and conducting online meetings can be challenging for students whose digital readiness is low. Some of the participants stated that they were bored during the sessions. However, by criticising the method constructively, they suggested that face-to-face implementation of the method could result better.

Moreover, it is possible to observe that some students did not favour the method because of the tasks' nature which requires students to practice their writing skills. Ahlquist (2011) also

found out that some students did not enjoy the implementation since they do not favour writing focused tasks. Furthermore, Iso-Ahola and Weissinger (1990) relates the occurrence of boredom to the characteristics of adolescence, and some "cool" students might tend to label everything "boring" as a result of this nature of being a teenager. Since Storyline method is based on a scenario and roleplay sessions, teen students might qualify role-play activities as dull or childish. In the study conducted by Werth (2018), it was found out that higher-level students in terms of age and proficiency perceived role-play activities as "too easy" and "childish".

On the other hand, Table 8 demonstrates that after the implementation of Storyline method, students' attitudes towards the content of English lessons (which is the second factor examined in the attitude scale) showed a significant increase. When the participants' positive responses to the interview question are examined, it is possible to deduce that there might be various factors that may have an impact on this positive change. First of all, the authenticity of the content might have an impact on the students' perceptions of the method since teens favour dealing with true-to-life issues. As mentioned, participants indicated that Storyline implementation contributed to the improvement of their real-life skills ($f = 4$). Ahlquist (2011) reported that students mainly indicated how they liked doing more with the target language and being engaged in practical work in the study conducted by her. In the same study, it was also reported that the implementation of Storyline helped students lose their fear of speaking English before their peers. Additionally, Mitchell (2017) stated that Storyline's use of created characters and settings made the implementation more real and motivating for the military linguist cadets. Mitchell also stated that the participants in the study enjoyed the problem-solving tasks since it was related to real-life and favoured taking on roles relevant to their future professional life. Syafri and Wulandari (2013) also indicate that Storyline stimulates the use of imagination on a high level. It provides learners with an opportunity to practice real-life through the use of fictional characters and settings.

Moreover, participants' comments on their experience of Storyline method implementation showed that most of the participants described the process as "fun" and "enjoyable" ($f = 13$). Róg (2014) also reported that an increase was found in the students' levels of intrinsic motivation, interest and enjoyment, and perceived competence, while there was a decrease in pressure and tension levels. Orehag (2017) was also indicated the motivational impact of

Storyline method since it is qualified chiefly as "fun" by the participants in the study and emphasised that creative, collaborative, and communicative tasks were favoured by the students and affected their motivation levels positively. As it is discussed, the collaborative nature of the method was qualified as fun in the current study as well. On the other hand, it is possible to state that the participants liked the opportunity of using their "creativity" (f = 7) throughout the process, and the creation of an imaginary setting and characters in the role-play sessions can be considered as the other factors which were labelled as "fun". As it can be observed in the study findings, while some participants may label role-play activities as "boring", some may praise it since it gives an opportunity to practice real-life situations. In her study with ELT teacher trainers, Brox (2010) found out that the participants favoured the fictive world and characters they created since hiding behind invented characters and having an opportunity to be creative behind a "mask" made the participants more comfortable. Ahlquist (2011) also stated that "using imagination" was identified as one of the features which contributed most to the student involvement. In their study, Yiğit and Erdoğan (2008) also found out that the method had an improving impact on the students' creative thinking while traditional methods were not found to be that effective. In her study, Mitchell-Barret (2010) emphasised that "creativity" was identified as a prevalent theme in the student responses and indicated that the method made students develop ownership over their learning experience and become intrinsically motivated by the context of the method and problems that needed to be solved.

Another common benefit of the method, which some of the participants of the present study indicated, was the method's contribution to the comprehension of English subjects and vocabulary (f = 8) learnt during the cycles. Rimmereide (2010) indicated that online Storyline created enthusiasm to promote the participants' basic language skills through the use of ICT. In her study, Ahlquist (2011) also found out that Storyline increased the students' lexical and structural knowledge and promoted the acquisition of basic language skills. In the same study, it is also stated that the participants promoted their capability of comprehending L2 instruction without the support that comes from the use of L1. Likewise, Alebiosu (2012) found out that Storyline method had a promoting impact on Nigerian 5th-grade students' academic achievements in Science class. Syfari and Wulandari (2013) also emphasised that Storyline method promoted the learner responsibility and awareness by

making the student learn from their own experiences. Moreover, they stated that the method made students practice their existing knowledge from other subjects since the tasks require interdisciplinary work. For instance, in the current study, students had an opportunity to practice "energy" topic from the science subject while designing a sustainable environment and "writing a petition" topic from Turkish subject while writing a petition to the municipality. Therefore, it can be said that Storyline contributes to the enhancement of the target subject's skills and provides an opportunity to improve the other subjects' academic enhancement. In their research, Güney and Doğan (2019) compared the impacts of Constructivist Learning Theory and Storyline method on the 4th-grade students' academic achievements and reported that the students who were instructed in the light of Storyline enhanced their academic success better. Toy and Akpınar (2020) also conducted a similar study with 7th graders, and according to the findings of the study, the storyline method was found to be more effective and successful in increasing the academic achievements of the participants and ensuring the perpetuation of the acquired knowledge.

From the findings of the current study and literature review, it is possible to conclude that the presentation and practice of the content are also as important as the content's itself for the students. While students' attitudes towards the EFL classes, the features/importance of the lessons, and the teacher's style did not show a significant difference, it was reported that implementation of Storyline increased the student attitude towards the content of the lesson significantly. Furthermore, since Storyline provided an opportunity to be involved in the context creatively, authentically, and collaboratively, it was possible to observe that students favoured the "fun" "content" they created themselves as a result of cooperation between their group members.

5.2 Suggestions

5.2.1 Suggestions Based on the Study

The current research showed that Storyline method did not have a significant impact on the students' attitudes towards the features-importance of EFL lessons and the teacher's style. In contrast, a significant difference was observed in the participants' attitudes towards the content of the lessons after the implementation. The comparison of quantitative and qualitative data made providing some suggestions possible in the light of the participant responses. First of all, as shown in Table 6, students' attitudes towards EFL lessons had

already been relatively positive before implementing the Storyline method. Therefore, studying with the participants whose pre-attitudes are negative could bring about a significant difference in the students' attitudes towards the lessons after the inclusion of the method. Random assignment of the implementation groups was the most complained issue in the current study. In the prior pilot study, groups were not formed randomly, and the students were able to choose their own group mates. Relatively, it was possible to obtain more positive feedback about the groups since it was an opportunity for the students to work with their close friends. On the other hand, the current study aimed to bring random students together to prevent possible discrimination problems, but it was perceived as unfavourable by most of the participants. Implementation of the Storyline with randomly formed groups can promote the learners' problem-solving and negotiation skills which are crucial 21st century skills. The method can also be beneficial for improving the task completion and organisation skills of the language learners. The collaborative nature of the method requires learners to work together, and it can be implemented with the learners from all age groups as warm up projects at the beginning of a class year. From the participant responses, it is also possible to deduce that Storyline implementations can be rather promising for vocational language classes. Since Storyline can be conducted in the light of various themes from various areas, it can be benefitted in vocational schools or courses to promote collaboration and task completion with the practice of vocational language.

5.2.2 Suggestions for Further Research

The current study was conducted as an action research case study, and the researcher was also the teacher of the implementation class. To eliminate the ethical issues and increase the reliability of the result, further research can be conducted with a co-teacher/researcher. Moreover, for the analysis of qualitative data, having a co-researcher or multiple raters can be beneficial to promote rater reliability. Because of ethical reasons and the quantity of sample, no control group was formed. In further research, the implementation group's final attitude towards the EFL classes can be compared with the control group's attitudes. Including more participants would ensure a relatively reliable result. Randomly assigned groups was one of the most complained issues by the participants of the current study. The cultural setting that the study takes place may also have an impact on the participants' attitudes towards randomly formed groups since the eastern and western cultures or

developed and non-developed countries' cultures may vary in terms of the perception of having random partners. This possible difference in the perceptions of participants can be investigated separately in the further studies. Moreover, the implementation can be conducted in two different classes. In one of the classes, the researcher can let the participants form their own groups while randomly assigned groups are formed in the other class. In that way, the researcher can observe the differences in the impact of Storyline method and the participants' perceptions. In the study, some of the participants pointed out that the method was "boring" for them. Randomly formed groups can be a factor underlying this comment, and it can be overcome in the same way suggested previously. Moreover, there might be various factors that caused this negative comment. One possible factor can be defined as the online platform on which the study was carried out. To overcome this possible problem, the implementation can be conducted on a different platform that is more suitable for online group work. Furthermore, the participants' age group can be another factor that may lead to this negative comment. Since the current study aimed to observe teens' attitudes and perceptions, it was conducted with 7th graders. For the upcoming studies, working with two different age groups and comparing their attitudes/perceptions can be a promising alternative to find out the most appropriate age group for Storyline method's implementation. Finally, two of the participants especially indicated that the method could be more fruitful when it is implemented in face-to-face education. More detailed studies can be designed to be conducted online with the utilisation of numerous Ed-Tech tools to attract students' attention, or the method's impact on online education and face-to-face education can be compared in further research. For the further research, a comparison of the participant responses and attitudes in the light of their English proficiency levels and genders can be suggested as well. The current research was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic, and there were limited data collection opportunities. In further studies, the method can be implemented in two different schools, and the findings can be discussed in a more detailed way. Lastly, the implementation time was limited since the school administration and parents were unfamiliar with distance education and concerned about finishing the curriculum on time. More cycles can be designed to be implemented, and a longitudinal study can be conducted for further research.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Permission from Provincial Directorate of National Education



T.C.
SAKARYA VALİLİĞİ
İl Millî Eğitim Müdürlüğü

Sayı : 74060378-44-E.17700368
Konu: Araştırma İzni (Kübra Nur AYAZ ÖZTÜRK)

04/12/2020

VALİLİK MAKAMINA

Sakarya Üniversitesi Rektörlüğü, Eğitim Bilimleri Enstitüsü Müdürlüğü Yabancı Diller Eğitimi Bilim Dalı tezli yüksek lisans programı öğrencisi Kübra Nur AYAZ ÖZTÜRK'ün "The Impact of the Storyline Approach on Young Learner's Attitude Towards EFL" konulu anket çalışmasını Müdürlüğümüze bağlı tüm okullarda yapmak istediklerini 08.11.2020 tarihli ve 10435 sayıları ile bildirilmiştir.

Söz konusu anket çalışmasının, Müdürlüğümüze bağlı tüm okullarda yapılması, yasal gerekliliğin ilgili Okul Müdürlüklerince yerine getirmesi kaydıyla Müdürlüğümüze uygun görülmektedir.

Makamlarınızca da uygun görülmesi halinde olurlarınıza arz ederim.

Fazilet DURMUŞ
İl Millî Eğitim Müdürü

OLUR
04/12/2020

Murat KARASU
Vali Yardımcısı

Ek: Anket Örneği (17 Sayfa)

Appendix 2. Permission from Sakarya University Ethics Committee

Evrak Tarih ve Sayısı: 09/11/2020-E.10209



T.C.
SAKARYA ÜNİVERSİTESİ REKTÖRLÜĞÜ
Etik Kurulu



Sayı :61923333/050.99/
Konu :28/09 Kübra Nur AYAZ
ÖZTÜRK

Sayın Kübra Nur AYAZ ÖZTÜRK

İtgi : Kübra Nur AYAZ ÖZTÜRK 23/10/2020 tarihli ve 0 sayılı yazı

Üniversitemiz Sosyal ve Beşeri Bilimler Etik Kurulu Başkanlığının 04.11.2020 tarihli ve 28 sayılı toplantısında alınan "09" nolu karar örneği ekte sunulmuştur.
Bilgilerinizi rica ederim.

Prof. Dr. Abdulvahit İMAMOĞLU
Sosyal ve Beşeri Bilimler Etik Kurulu
Başkanı V.

9. Kübra Nur AYAZ ÖZTÜRK'ün " The Impact of the Storyline Method on Teen's Attitude Towards EFL " başlıklı çalışması görüşmeye açıldı.
Yapılan görüşmeler sonunda Kübra Nur AYAZ ÖZTÜRK'ün " The Impact of the Storyline Method on Teen's Attitude Towards EFL " başlıklı çalışmasının Etik açıdan uygun olduğuna oy birliği ile karar verildi.

Evrakı Doğrulamak İçin : <http://193.140.253.232/envision.Sorgula/BelgeDogrulama.aspx?V=BEKVBS0ZF>

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Bu belge 5070 sayılı Elektronik İmza Kanununun 5. Maddesi gereğince güvenli elektronik imza ile imzalanmıştır.

Appendix 3. Attitude Scale Towards EFL Lessons

İNGİLİZCE DERSİNE AİT TUTUM ÖLÇEĞİ

| İngilizce Dersine Ait Tutumlar | Tamamen Katılıyorum | Katılıyorum | Kararsızım | Katılmıyorum | Hiç Katılmıyorum |
|---|---------------------|-------------|------------|--------------|------------------|
| 1. İngilizce dersini sıkıcı buluyorum. | | | | | |
| 2. İngilizce derslerini diğer derslere göre daha zevkli buluyorum. | | | | | |
| 3. İngilizce dersinde öğretmenimizin sürekli eleştirmesi beni dersten soğutuyor. | | | | | |
| 4. Çalışsam da İngilizce dersinden düşük notlar alıyorum. | | | | | |
| 5. İngilizce dersi merakımı gideriyor. | | | | | |
| 6. İngilizce dersi konularını çabuk unuttuğum için çalışmak içimden gelmiyor. | | | | | |
| 7. İngilizce dersini yararlı olduğuna inandığım için seviyorum. | | | | | |
| 8. İngilizce dersine çalışmak zorunda olduğum için çalışıyorum. | | | | | |
| 9. İngilizce dersinde öğrendiğim bilgileri başkalarıyla paylaşmak hoşuma gidiyor. | | | | | |
| 10. İngilizce dersinin işlenişi hoşuma gitmiyor. | | | | | |
| 11. İngilizce dersi güncel bilgileri içerdiğinde hoşuma gidiyor. | | | | | |
| 12. İngilizce dersi konularını anlamakta güçlük çekiyorum. | | | | | |
| 13. İngilizce dersi öğretmenimin arkadaşça tavırları beni derse çekiyor. | | | | | |
| 14. İngilizce dersinin olduğu gün okula gitmek içimden gelmiyor. | | | | | |
| 15. İngilizce dersini kabiliyetim olduğu için seviyorum. | | | | | |
| 16. İngilizce dersini anlamsız ve gereksiz buluyorum. | | | | | |
| 17. İngilizce dersini çalışmaktan büyük bir zevk duyuyorum. | | | | | |
| 18. İngilizce dersi benim için öncelikli dersler arasında yer almıyor. | | | | | |
| 19. İngilizce dersini kolay ve anlaşılır bir ders olduğu için seviyorum. | | | | | |
| 20. İngilizce dersinin olduğu günü sabırsızlıkla bekliyorum. | | | | | |

Appendix 4. Focus Group Interview Question and Responses

“What do you think about Storyline Group Work?”

- *I don't understand why people think like if your English is good you are the one who does everything in the group.*
- *I like the lessons because of you miss <3*
- *You hate your group FRIENDS...*
- *Lessons are enjoyable, I'm learning lots of new words and new perspectives and so it's important.*
- *I hate groups!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!*
- *group work is nice but boring.*
- *I enjoyed it.*
- *I don't like the lessons just because of these group works.*
- *I enjoyed role-plays and character creation.*
- *I like group work and I think group work is good but sometimes bad. Because when I can't find any idea. Once, even if I said something, they told I did not participate in the project just because I did not have an idea. But I like my group and my group friends. They are very kind.*
- *I love my household because my friends are trying their bests (except some ones) and we usually had fun and it is important for our future, we should be able to work with everybody we like or dislike, it teaches us so many things I love group projects :)*
- *after these fun sessions i love English more*
- *Good*
- *I think we should choose our group friends.*
- *its good*
- *personal studies can be more beneficial than random groups*
- *i could work with my friends more in the distance education, this is good.*
- *what can i do if I hate my group friends >:)*
- *group is good BRUH.*
- *I don't like writing, it is boring but its obligatory*
- *i can't write anything in Eng. but my group mates helped me improve my skills.*
- *stop hating group works :(*
- *I like imaginary neighbourhood idea and the projects but if we could choose our household, it would be better. the positive thing about Storyline is I learnt lots of new vocabulary from my friends and I improved my computer using skills. I learnt studying with a group but i don't like it 😞 But I can say that after the group discussions, I can speak faster and clearer.*

- *I love it because i love group works but some didn't participate in the projects a lot. i don't know why... And group projects are important for education life. I like having new characters and being households.*
- *I think group work teaches us something. I love it because it is fun, and I love my group.*
- *it good for improving writing skills but it's boring.*
- *I think it was a good method, there were good activities I like it because i love coding and generally coding schools give their students assignments like projects, not tests or anything, and generally projects have to be done with some friends. It is not easy to make a project without someone/some people. And it's fun!*
- *i hate group works, I love my friends, but I prefer working alone.*
- *In group projects we had quarrels and I didn't like*
- *I think group works are very enjoyable because we cannot have activities like this in distance education.*
- *I worked with my friends and we made some jokes and we had fun. We learnt so much from each other, I love group works.*
- *I think it was fun because of imaginary characters and households we created, I love my group, but I think there could be other homework or activities instead of group work because we couldn't agree during some tasks. that's my opinion but it was good.*
- *I didn't have fun in group work bc it's so boring it was not useful for me i think, maybe in face to face it could be better..*
- *I think group tasks were really good for learning English and friendship.*
- *I couldn't participate very actively because i think its sometimes boring and difficult.*
- *I think that the group works were great because i love my group, they are smart and hardworking students (3 of them) and we really behave carefully for our projects.*
- *long story short i enjoyed the group tasks and i am waiting for new group works :)*
- *I personally do not like my group but it's fun in a way thanks to the Storyline characters and setting.*
- *Sometimes it was enjoyable but sometimes boring.*
- *fun but stressful because of the fights.*
- *it is boring and it made us fight during production, I don't like it.*
- *I like having an imaginary neighbourhood.*
- *It contributed to my comprehension much better than the regular lessons.*
- *I remembered the words I learnt from my friends during the tasks better.*
- *It was confusing. for me...*
- *It could be better at school.*
- *It improved my imagination.*

Appendix 5. Rubric for Weekly Tasks

| | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
|--|--|--|---|--|--|
| Relevance and Content | Fully satisfies the requirements of the given task. Includes all relevant information. | Mostly covers the requirements of the given task. Includes most of the relevant information. | Addresses some of the requirements. Includes some relevant information but not clearly focused. | Attempts to address the topic but few relevant information. Digresses often from the topic. | Does not attempt the task/the answer is completely irrelevant. |
| Organisation | Includes an inviting introduction and a satisfactory conclusion. Skilfully manages paragraphing. Logical arrangement of ideas. Manages all aspects of cohesion well. | Includes an introduction, body and conclusion. Uses paragraphing successfully. Uses a range of cohesive devices but may look mechanical. | Attempts to include an introduction, body and conclusion. Main idea is not clearly supported with details. Less attention given to organization. Rare use of transitions. | Begins abruptly. No paragraphing or inappropriate paragraphing. No attempt to maintain logical arrangement of ideas. | No clear message is communicated. |
| Vocabulary and Word Choice | Uses a sophisticated range of vocabulary which is appropriate for the purpose and audience. May use figurative language. | Uses accurate vocabulary which suits the audience and purpose with a mixture of precise and general words. Occasional errors in word choice. | Uses a fair range of vocabulary to express ideas. May be inappropriate for the audience and purpose at some occasions. | Uses a limited range of vocabulary. Mostly inaccurate for the purpose and audience. | Inappropriate and inaccurate vocabulary. |
| Grammar, Spelling and Punctuation | Uses a variety of grammatically correct sophisticated sentence structures. Perfect spelling and accurate punctuation. | Uses mostly correct sentence structures with 1-2 mistakes. Correct spelling and appropriate punctuation with occasional errors. | Uses basic sentence structures with some errors. Uses spelling and punctuation with some errors. | Uses mostly sentence fragments with frequent errors. Frequent errors in spelling and punctuation. | Writing incomprehensible. |
| Presentation | Neat, easy to read, error free | Mostly readable, neat, minimum errors | Fairly readable. Some strain on the reader. | Not clear. Considerable strain on the reader. | Illegible. |