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المجلة الأمريكية الدولية للعلوم الإنسانية والاجتماعية

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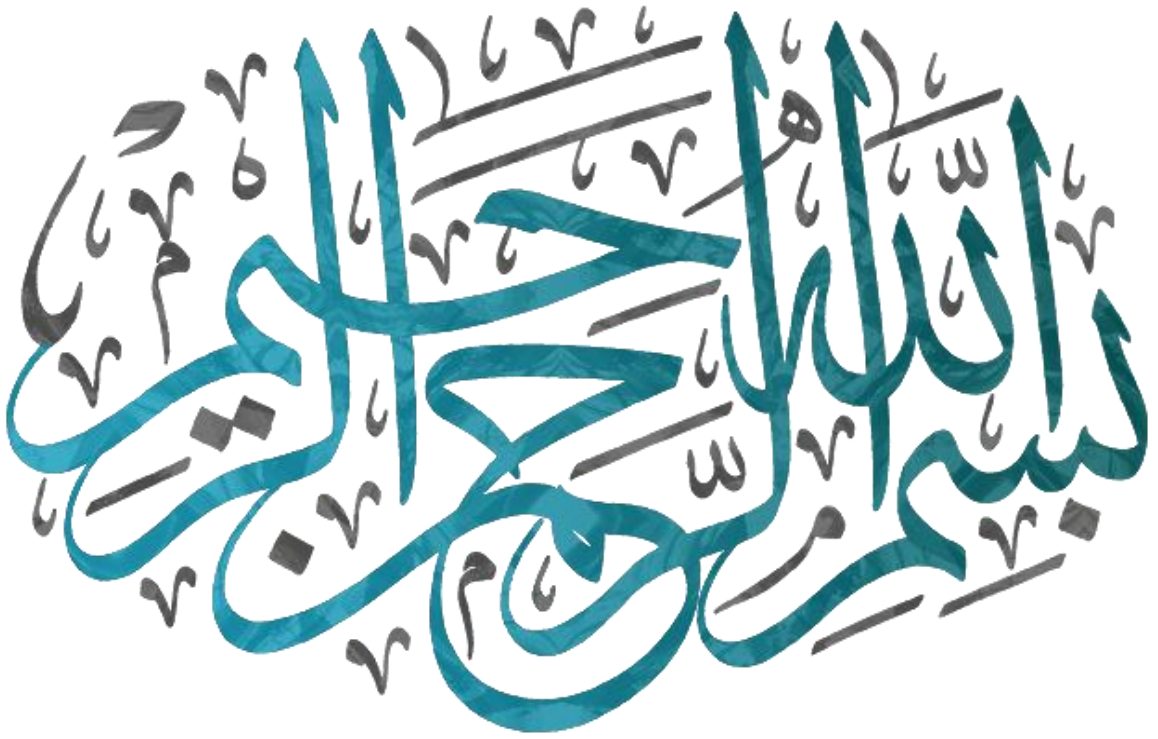
رقم الايداع القانوني في المكتبة الوطنية المغربية (2025 Pe00006)

رقم الايداع القانوني في دار الكتب والوثائق العراقية (2735)

تصدر عن الأكاديمية الأمريكية الدولية
للتعليم العالي والتدريب

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تتألف هيئة تحرير المجلة الأمريكية الدولية للعلوم الإنسانية والاجتماعية من نخبة من العلماء والخبراء المتميزين من مختلف المؤسسات الأكاديمية الدولية. وتتولى الهيئة مسؤولية الحفاظ على جودة البحوث المنشورة وتقديم التوجيه الاستراتيجي لتطوير المجلة.

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كلمة العرو



بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

يُشرفنا في هيئة تحرير "المجلة الأمريكية الدولية للتعليم العالي والتدريب" أن نضع بين أيديكم العدد السابع والعشرين (الجزء الثاني)، الصادر في سياق متجدد من مساعيها الرامية إلى تعزيز جسور المعرفة الأكاديمية ونشر الرؤى العلمية المبتكرة.

إن هذا الإصدار يأتي ليؤكد على التزام المجلة الراسخ بأن تكون منصة عالمية تجمع النخب الأكاديمية والباحثين من مختلف أقطار العالم، حيث يضم هذا الجزء مجموعة من البحوث الرصينة التي خضعت لمعايير تحكيم دقيقة، تعكس عمق التفكير وتعدد المقاربات في مجالات التعليم العالي والتدريب المهني.

لقد سعينا من خلال هذه البحوث إلى تسليط الضوء على قضايا معاصرة، تدمج بين النظرية والتطبيق، وتستجيب للتحديات الراهنة التي تواجه المؤسسات التعليمية في ظل التحولات العالمية المتسارعة. إن مشاركة باحثين من جنسيات وخلفيات علمية متنوعة في هذا العدد هي شهادة حية على المكانة الدولية التي بلغتها المجلة، وعلى قدرتها على احتضان التنوع الفكري الذي يثري الحقل المعرفي.

ختاماً، نتوجه بخالص الشكر والتقدير لجميع الباحثين الذين ساهموا بنتائجهم الفكري في هذا العدد، ولأعضاء الهيئة العلمية والاستشارية الذين واصلوا جهودهم في مراجعة وتقييم الأعمال بكل تفان. نتمنى أن تجدوا في صفحات هذا الجزء ما يغني معارفكم ويحفز نقاشاتكم الأكاديمية.

مع خالص التحيات،

هيئة تحرير المجلة

2026/07/17 ديلاوير- الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية

الملاحظة القانونية

البحوث المنشورة في المجلة لا تعبر عن وجهة نظر المجلة ، بل عن رأي كاتبها.

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The Effect of Dialogical Storytelling on Enhancing Speaking Fluency in English as a Fourth Language among Grade 11 High School Students in Buqata, Golan Heights

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Abstract

This study aimed to investigate the influence of the dialogical storytelling technique on the level of English as a fourth language fluency among tenth-grade high school students in Buqata village which is located in the Druze region of the Golan Heights and is inhabited by students who operate in three languages (Druze Arabic, Druze Hebrew, and Druze Aramaic) prior to meeting English in formal language teaching setting. The quasi-experimental pre-test/post-test design was used to conduct this study, which involved 40 students: 20 for the experimental group and 20 for the control group. The intervention group was taught in structured dialogical storytelling activities throughout the intervention period, and the control group was taught using the traditional teacher-centered approaches. Each group's performance on both speaking and writing was evaluated on four criteria: fluency, interaction, coherence, and communicative effectiveness, with each criterion rated on a scale of 25.

The two groups were pre-tested and found to be equivalent. The comparison of post-test mean total score of the experimental group and the control group showed that the experimental group gained 60.20 points while the control group gained 16.45 points. An independent-samples t-test produced $t(38) = 12.117$, $p < .001$, Cohen's $d = 3.832$, while a paired-samples t-test within the experimental group yielded $t(19) = 42.646$, $p < .001$. The two null hypotheses were rejected. There were important gains for all four rubrics, with the between-group effect size for fluency being the highest ($d = 2.700$), and the interaction being the lowest but still high ($d = 1.569$).

The findings are analyzed using four theories: Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), Long's Interaction Hypothesis, and Swain's Output Hypothesis, all

of which suggest that more effective ways to increase the rate of fluency progress are through sustained, interactive, meaning-focused oral production. The findings corroborate those of similar studies done in Saudi Arabia, Ecuador, Malaysia, and the United Kingdom, and add to the literature regarding the fourth language Druze multilingual context that had never been studied previously in the field of applied linguistics.

The study concludes that dialogical storytelling is an effective and low resource teaching method for enhancing the fluency of multilingual students whose English is a late-acquired language, which is used in school. The recommendations are addressed to teachers, curriculum designers and future researchers in similar multilingual education contexts.

أثر السرد القصصي الحوارى فى تعزيز الطلاقة الشفوية باللغة الإنكليزية كلغة رابعة لدى طلاب الصف العاشر فى المرحلة الثانوية فى بقعائا، الجولان

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لغة إنكليزية

ثانوية يقعائا الشاملة

الملخص

هدفت هذه الدراسة إلى بحث تأثير أسلوب السرد الحوارى على مستوى طلاقة اللغة الإنكليزية كلغة رابعة لدى طلاب الصف العاشر فى قرية بوقاطة، الواقعة فى منطقة الدروز فى هضبة الجولان، والتي يسكنها طلاب يتحدثون ثلاث لغات (العربية الدرزية، والعبرية الدرزية، والأرامية الدرزية) قبل تعلم اللغة الإنكليزية فى بيئة تعليمية رسمية. استُخدم تصميم شبه تجريبى مع اختبار قبلى وبعدي لإجراء هذه الدراسة، وشملت 40 طالباً: 20 طالباً فى المجموعة التجريبية و20 طالباً فى المجموعة الضابطة. تلقت المجموعة التجريبية تدريباً على أنشطة سرد حوارى منظمة طوال فترة التدخل، بينما تلقت المجموعة الضابطة تدريباً باستخدام الأساليب التقليدية التي تركز على المعلم. قُيِّم أداء كل مجموعة فى التحدث والكتابة بناءً على أربعة معايير: الطلاقة، والتفاعل، والترابط، والفعالية التواصلية، حيث تم تقييم كل معيار على مقياس من 25.

خضعت المجموعتان لاختبار قبلى، وتبين أنهما متكافئتان. أظهرت مقارنة متوسط الدرجات الكلية للاختبار اللاحق بين المجموعة التجريبية والمجموعة الضابطة أن المجموعة التجريبية حققت 60.20 نقطة، بينما حققت المجموعة الضابطة 16.45 نقطة. وأظهر اختبار t للعينات المستقلة قيمة $t(38) = 12.117$ ، وقيمة $p < 0.001$ ، ومعامل $Cohen's d = 3.832$ ، بينما أظهر اختبار t للعينات المزدوجة داخل المجموعة التجريبية قيمة $t(19) = 42.646$ ، وقيمة $p < 0.001$ وقد رُفِضت الفرضيتان الصفريتان. ولوحظت مكاسب كبيرة فى جميع المعايير الأربعة، حيث كان حجم تأثير المجموعة على الطلاقة هو الأعلى ($d = 2.700$)، بينما كان حجم تأثير التفاعل هو الأدنى ولكنه لا يزال مرتفعاً ($d = 1.569$).

...تم تحليل النتائج باستخدام أربع نظريات: نظرية فيجوتسكي الاجتماعية الثقافية، وتدریس اللغة التواصلية، وفرضية لونغ للتفاعل، وفرضية سوين للإنتاج اللغوي، والتي تشير جميعها إلى أن أكثر الطرق فعالية لزيادة معدل التقدم فى الطلاقة اللغوية هي من خلال الإنتاج الشفهي المستمر والتفاعلي والمركز على المعنى. وتؤكد هذه النتائج نتائج دراسات مماثلة أجريت فى المملكة العربية السعودية والإكوادور وماليزيا

والمملكة المتحدة، وتُضيف إلى الأدبيات المتعلقة بالسياق الدرزي متعدد اللغات كلغة رابعة، والذي لم يُدرس سابقًا في مجال اللغويات التطبيقية.

وتخلص الدراسة إلى أن سرد القصص الحوارية يُعد أسلوبًا تعليميًا فعالًا وبسيطًا لتعزيز طلاقة الطلاب متعددي اللغات الذين اكتسبوا اللغة الإنجليزية في وقت متأخر من حياتهم، والذين يستخدمونها في المدرسة. وتُوجه التوصيات إلى المعلمين ومصممي المناهج والباحثين المستقبليين في سياقات التعليم متعدد اللغات المماثلة.

Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Language learning is not always a straightforward process, and nowhere is this less true than in multilingual communities where students learn multiple languages concurrently prior to formal English instruction. In the Druze village of Buqata in the Golan Heights, students in Grade 11 are usually speaking a variety of languages, all of which perform a different role in society or in an institution. In this case, English is taught last, formally, and has the greatest amount of academic burden, yet is the one language that is used the least. Fluent, of course, is difficult to get students to speak.

In the last decade, speaking fluency in a foreign or other language has received a fair deal of research interest, and researchers are now no longer focused solely on fluency as a single attribute, but on fluency as a set of behaviors including speed, pausing patterns, repair strategies, and overall communicative coherence (Segalowitz, 2010, as cited in De Jong et al., 2015). What stands out in this body of work is that it is not just about repetition and exposure, but also about low-stakes and repeated opportunities to generate spoken language in interaction with others, with the latter being the most effective way to achieve fluency (Tavakoli & Hunter, 2018).

The use of storytelling has long been a feature in language pedagogy that has sought to create just these kinds of conditions. As students tell stories, particularly ones they have to listen to and interact with another student or group, they must recall word usage, perform syntax in real time, respond to listeners' cues, and maintain longer stories. Although challenging in themselves, these require the learner to extend their output beyond the controlled practice of exercises (Isbell et al., 2004, cited in Mello, 2019). Dialogical storytelling involves more than a one-way exchange of stories; students are required to listen to the others they are speaking to as well as speak, to negotiate meaning together, and to adapt their language to their interlocutor (Avraamidou & Osborne, 2009).

Although there is an increasing body of evidence that supports the value of storytelling in language development (Kirsch, 2018; Miller & Pennycuff, 2008, as cited in Wright, 2020), there are not many studies that specifically focus on the dialogical approach as an instructional technique for speaking fluency in a multilingual, fourth-language context. The Druze community of Buqata is a unique context to consider this question, one that has not been

extensively studied in the field of applied linguistics, despite the linguistic complexity of the community and the high importance of standardized English assessment for students in Grade 11.

This study tackles the gap head-on. It evaluates the effects of a structured dialogical storytelling intervention on the fluency of speaking among EFL fourth-language learners in the tenth grade, based on the recent theoretical research in the field of sociocultural approaches to language learning (Lantolf et al., 2015) and empirical studies examining the effects of a dialogic approach on the fluency of EFL learners (Kormos, 2014; Tavakoli & Hunter, 2018).

1.2 Problem of the study

In the process of direct observation of the English classes conducted in Buqata by the researcher, a certain pattern has become evident: students who possess the ability to read and write English at a fair level of competence remain mostly silent when presented with the opportunity to speak in English. They interrupt themselves half-sentence, they utter brief, disjointed words, and lose the flow of the sentence they were attempting to pronounce. It is not vocabulary or grammar in the abstract that is the problem, but rather the incapacity to maintain spoken English in the real communicative situation.

This disjuncture between written and oral performance is not by chance. In such classrooms, English teaching is often focused on grammar rules, memorization of vocabulary, and written work with speaking being the secondary part of the task, which they do at the end of a lesson, or not at all. Students seldom speak longer than one sentence in English, and they hardly do this on their own. When speaking activities exist, they are usually scripted or strictly regulated which restricts the type of extended oral production that actually needs fluency. The literature aligns on this fact: fluency is the result of long-lasting meaningful conversations, not passive listening to the language forms (Tavakoli and Hunter, 2018; Kormos, 2014).

The larger question lies in the fact that oral proficiency is a factor of being able to use language on the spot - to recall words, handle syntax, and convey ideas in real time, without the assurance of a written draft or even time to think over. As demonstrated by Skehan (2009), task-based speaking conditions do so because they place real-time demands that cause learners to attain the type of automaticity that fluent speech demands. In situations where students are seldom put in such situations, their oral output remains disjointed and intimidated, irrespective of their level of knowledge about the language.

In the case of students in Buqata, this is even more complicated by the fact that English is their fourth language. All of them compete with one another when it comes to cognitive space, with the last introduced, least used language outside of the classroom, English, having the poorest hold in spontaneous production (Cenoz, 2013; Cummins, 2017). This fact is not met by conventional teaching methods, which are mostly oriented towards monolingual or second-language students.

Dialogical storytelling provides an alternative point of beginning. It also allows more time of oral interaction by framing speaking practice as a collaborative, narrative dialogue between students without the evaluative pressure that tends to close students down. Kirsch (2018) discovered that instructional storytelling provided significant improvements in the use of spoken language and learner access to activities in EFL classrooms. Mello (2001) also reported the experiences of co-constructed narrative tasks to elicit extended speech by students not yet ready to talk. Whether such effects can be applied to students who work in English as a fourth language, or in a multilingual community in the particular profile of Buqata is a question that has not been answered in the existing body of literature.

1.3 Research Questions

This study takes up that question. In particular, the following general research question is answered:

How does dialogical storytelling affect the students of the grade 11 high school of Buqata, Golan Heights in developing their fluency in English as a fourth language?

The four sub-questions that follow are drawn from this:

- What are the main pedagogical points that kind of show up in dialogical storytelling as a teaching approach for classroom work, like generally speaking?
- How does dialogical storytelling specifically affect students' fluency when they speak English, in practical terms?
- Do the experimental group and the control group show a statistically meaningful difference at $\alpha = 0.05$ in their average scores from the post speaking fluency test?
- Are the pre and post-speaking fluency scores significantly different, using a 0.05 level of significance, for the experimental group?

1.4 Research Objectives

This research discusses the possibility of dialogical storytelling to build fluency in speaking English as a fourth language among high school learners. In particular, it seeks to:

- Test how dialogical storytelling can be used to improve the fluency of students who speak English as a fourth language.
- Determine the key pedagogical aspects that define dialogical storytelling as an educational approach in the classroom.
- Compare the oral fluency test of the students in the experimental and control groups in the post speaking fluency test.
- Measure the level of speaking fluency improvement among the experimental group students in the pre-test and post-test.

1.5 Research Hypothesis

In this research, the null hypotheses are:

H₀₁: There are no statistically significant differences at the level of significance ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) between the mean scores of the experimental group and the mean scores of the control group on the post speaking fluency test.

H₀₂: There are no statistically significant differences at the level of significance ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) between the mean scores of the experimental group on the pre- and post-speaking fluency tests, because of exposure to dialogical storytelling.

1.6 Significance of the study

This study is significant at a number of levels - theoretical, practical, and contextual.

In theory, it adds to the increasing literature on interaction-based methods of developing oral fluency (Tavakoli and Hunter, 2018; Kormos, 2014) by bringing this research to the under researched multilingual domain. The fact that English is the fourth language in Buqata poses the following questions which cannot be fully addressed by monolingual or second language studies: How do students cope with spoken production when three other language systems are competing to be activated? Does storytelling in pairs decrease or increase this cognitive load? The research provides empirical evidence that can answer these questions.

In practice, the results can enlighten English language teachers who work in Druze communities of the Golan Heights and in other similar multilingual environments throughout the Arab world. In case dialogical storytelling gives any quantifiable increase in fluency in a controlled environment, it offers a practical, classroom-implementable strategy that can be adopted by teachers without specialized training or costly resources. It is no light matter in situations where resources are scarce and there is curricular pressure.

In the case of students, the meaning is more immediate. Grade 11 is a pivotal year in the Israeli school system, with standardized tests in English having actual implications on the academic paths of students. A predictable intervention to facilitate oral fluency might influence both outcomes and students feeling confident to use English in non-classroom settings (Horwitz, 2017; Cummins, 2017).

Lastly, this paper sheds light on the Druze community of Buqata as an object of applied linguistics inquiry - a community whose multilingual existence has hardly been manifested in the scholarly literature, yet its intricacy and its place in the general discourse on language learning in a minority and a heritage language (Shohamy, 2006, as cited in Blackledge and Creese, 2017).

1.7 Definition of terms

Dialogical Storytelling

Conceptual Definition:

In dialogical storytelling, an interactive narrative technique, two or more participants co-create and share stories by using a structured, turn-based, verbal dialogue. It has no monologic storytelling, but instead each participant has to be an active listener, to respond to their interlocutor, and to play their part in creating a common story in real-time. Dialogical storytelling, which is based on sociocultural theories of language and learning, considers the spoken interaction as the medium and mechanism of language development (Avraamidou and Osborne, 2009; Vygotsky, 1978, as cited in Lantolf et al., 2015).

Operational Definition:

Dialogical storytelling in this paper is defined as a sequence of classroom tasks whereby students in Grade 11 in the experimental group work in pairs, alternating narrating, continuing, and responding to story prompts in the English language throughout a sequence of instruction. The sessions are organized in a structured order: there is a story prompt, the students negotiate its creation by playing verbal turns, and the story is brought to an end in a collaborative effort. There is no scripting or memorization of performance; students create spoken English on-the-fly within the dialogical support.

Speaking Fluency

Conceptual Definition:

Speaking fluency refers to the ability to speak fluently, continuously, and with little interference to communication. It cannot be compared to speed per se; researchers identify three quantifiable dimensions: speed fluency (frequency of speech and syllable production), breakdown fluency (frequency and duration of pauses, hesitations, and fillers), and repair fluency (how much speakers correct or rephrase themselves) (Tavakoli and Hunter, 2018; Skehan, 2015). Fluency is construed as an effect of oral production in real-life communicative situations, and not of either rehearsed or read-aloud speech.

Operational Definition:

Speaking fluency in this study is assessed using a structured oral test, which will be conducted twice - one before the intervention (pre-test) and another after the intervention (post-test). Students are requested to deliver a speech on a specific topic within a certain period of time. They are graded using a scoring rubric that covers their speech rate, frequency of pauses, use of fillers, and the coherence of speech. The same rubric and conditions apply to both the experimental and control groups.

English as a fourth language (EFL4)

Conceptual Definition:

English as a fourth language is a description of a learning situation where English is learned as the fourth language, and there are already three other established languages, each with different social, educational or cultural purposes. Within this context, learners have to deal with two or more competing language systems at the same time, which puts extra cognitive pressure on real-time oral production than in the second- or third-language context (Cenoz, 2013; Cummins, 2017). The sequence and role of each language in the repertoire of the learner determine the resources that can be used to produce English and the interference patterns that may interfere with the production of English.

Operational Definition:

The term will mean in this study the language profile of students in Grade 11 in Buqata, Golan Heights, where Arabic is their mother tongue as an informal language, and formal Arabic is their second. Hebrew is their third language, and English is their fourth language taught in the formal curriculum. The study has a uniform language background of all its participants as verified by a learner background questionnaire, which is conducted at the beginning of the study.

Experimental Group**Conceptual Definition:**

The experimental group is the group of individuals receiving the treatment or intervention being studied in experimental research, where the researchers can measure its impact by comparing results to the group that does not undergo the treatment or intervention (Creswell and Creswell, 2018).

Operational Definition:

In the present research, the experimental group will be comprised of Grade 11 students in the identified school in Buqata who are going to be exposed to the dialogical storytelling intervention throughout the entire instructional process, on top of their regular English-based curriculum. Their fluency in speech is evaluated in the pre-test and the post-test.

Control Group**Conceptual Definition:**

An experimental study has a control group, which is the group of participants who require no intervention; they remain under standard or baseline conditions. It gives the comparison based on which the impact of the treatment is analyzed (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Operational Definition:

The control group in this study will include Grade 11 students in the same school but who are enrolled in the normal English curriculum and who have not attended the dialogical storytelling activities. They are pre-tested and post-tested like the experimental group, in the same conditions, and with the same assessment instrument.

Pre-test / Post-test**Conceptual Definition:**

Pre-test is an evaluation done prior to an instructional intervention to determine a baseline of the performance of the participants. A post-test is a similar or identical test that is given after the intervention to evaluate whether or not measurable change has taken place. They are combined to constitute the core of a pre-test post-test experimental design (Creswell and Creswell, 2018).

Operational Definition:

In this paper, the pre-test and post-test will be conducted as a structured oral speaking activity whereby, students will speak on a given topic within timed conditions. Both instances are evaluated using the same rubric (including speech rate, pause patterns, filler usage, and communicative coherence overall). Pre-test scores provide a baseline of the groups in terms of their fluency; post-test scores are compared across and within groups to measure intervention impact.

Chapter Two: Theoretical framework

2.1 English as a Fourth Language

2.1.1 The Concept of Fourth Language Acquisition

Historically, language acquisition studies have concerned the learning of a first language (L1) and to a slightly lesser degree, a second language (L2). The study of third and subsequent languages is a relatively new area of study. It is Cenoz (2013) who refers to the acquisition of any language that is not the same as the one the learner speaks as the L1 and is acquired after one has already acquired at least one other language as the third language acquisition (TLA). The fourth language acquisition (L4A) is a step further of this framework, as it refers to the learning of a language by a person who has already mastered the use of the three previous languages - a scenario that has become very common in the multilingual societies around the world (Cenoz, 2013).

The difference between L1 and L2, L3 and L4 is not a question of counting languages only. Every new language that is added to the repertoire of the learner comes under different circumstances. L1 is learned by immersion in early childhood, without effort, and without being taught in a second language system. The L2 is normally learned later and usually with a certain amount of formal teaching and influenced by the structures of the L1 of the acquirer. The L3 and L4, which are learned even later, are under the pressure of all the previous languages and are exposed to a more complicated network of transfer, interference, and resource competition than any of the previous languages (De Angelis, 2007, as cited in Cenoz, 2013).

In the case of students in Buqata, students learn English subsequent to the languages of Arabic, Hebrew, and Aramaic, already having found a cognitive and social presence in the students, leaving the acquisition of the English language to its own set of circumstances that are not yet well delineated by either the traditional SLA theory or the research on L3 acquisition.

2.1.2 Characteristics of Fourth Language Learners

Learners of a fourth language come into each new learning process with an enriched yet cognitively challenging language background. A number of features of this population are especially applicable to the development of speaking.

The most researched phenomenon in additional language learning is language transfer. Transfer is the effect that a language already learned has on the production and processing of a new language - facilitative (when there is a feature in common with the target), or interfering (when the languages are different). In fourth-language learning, transfer is cross-source and the learner has to cope not only with L1-to-L4 transfer that predominates the traditional SLA explanations but with L2-to-L4 and L3-to-L4 as well (Cenoz, 2013). To a student in Buqata learning spoken English, this involves having to negotiate Arabic phonology, Hebrew morphosyntax, and Aramaic lexical influence simultaneously - a processing load, which has no direct parallel in the language world of the second-language learner.

The very fact of multilingualism influences the relations of the learner to the acquisition of other languages in intricate ways. As demonstrated by Cenoz (2013), metalinguistic awareness and prior experience of learning a language are transferred to new language learning in bilinguals and multilinguals - they know that languages are systems, that words may be looked up, that mistakes may be corrected, and that even incomplete knowledge may be used to communicate. This awareness is capable of aiding vocabulary learning and understanding. Its impact on oral fluency, though, is not as direct: the metalinguistic sensitivity, which promotes reflection, may slow down the production of automatic speech, as learners take time to check their output with a variety of competing language systems.

The issue of cognitive load is an important consideration in oral production in the fourth language. Fourth language speaking places the learner in the difficult position of having to conceptualize what they wish to say, choose the right lexical items out of a multilingual mental lexicon, apply the grammatical rules that might not be identical to all of the three languages they have already mastered, and create articulate and coherent speech on the spot, all whilst accommodating the attentional demands of listening to and responding to an interlocutor (Kormos, 2014). This cognitive load is relatively greater than the one experienced by a monolingual L2 learner and is evident in the speaking behavior in the form of more pausing, shorter utterances, and increased use of formulaic language (Skehan, 2009).

Language experience in the past may under certain circumstances become a resource. Cenoz (2013) has recorded that multilingual learners tend to be more strategic in engaging with new language, more tolerant to ambiguity and more practised in code switching- all skills which can be exploited in interactive speaking activities. This implies that more pedagogical strategies that utilize the entire multilingual repertoire of the students, instead of the repertoire being viewed as an interference that needs to be discouraged, can yield improved speaking results in L4 learners.

2.1.3 Teaching English in Multilingual Environments

The challenges of teaching English in a multilingual community are not those that monolingual-oriented pedagogy is tailored to meet. The greatest of these is the disconnect between teaching suppositions and student facts. The majority of EFL programs and pedagogies are modeled after the L1 learner and the L2 English. They fail to consider the cognitive, social, and affective aspects of learning English as a fourth language - and in such a community as Buqata, this disconnect yields students who have acquired written knowledge of the English language but still cannot speak it fluently (Cummins, 2017).

The sociolinguistic environment is directly involved in the development of speaking. Languages gain their fluency in speech by being spoken, by communicating daily, by talking, by engaging in low-stakes oral production of everyday speech. To students in Buqata, Arabic, Hebrew, and Aramaic, all this type of daily reinforcement is available. English does not. It is experienced mostly during school day and in teacher-led instructional lessons that seldom provide an environment that can result to prolonged spontaneous speaking (Horwitz, 2010). The consequence is that the students arrive at Grade 11 possessing an inactive knowledge of English and practically no automatic access to spoken production, a trend attributable to the social and institutional standing of English within the community and not any lack among students themselves (Cummins, 2017).

Teaching English well in a multilingual environment thus necessitates strategies to offset the lack of exposure out of school by establishing high-quality, sustained in-class speaking using the in-class setting. It also entails being sensitive to how language anxiety may contribute to the performance of oral expression in multilingual learners, which can be paraphrased as follows: students who negotiate multiple languages and multiple social identities with language tend to be highly sensitive to the evaluative stakes of performing oral expression in a language they do not command perfectly, and this sensitivity may be counterproductive to the spontaneous output that fluency development demands (Horwitz, 2010).

2.2 Speaking Skill and Speaking Fluency

2.2.1 The Concept of Speaking Skill

The most common and the most practically important of the four language skills is the ability to speak. According to Richards (2006), speaking is a productive skill that comprises the real-time application of language in order to convey ideas, needs, and intentions in various social and transactional settings. Contrary to reading and writing, which offer an opportunity to plan, revise, and consult any external resources, speaking requires the learner to generate language on the spot, negotiate the structural requirements of discourse, and still remain communicatively coherent and responsive to the reactions of an interlocutor (Kormos, 2014).

Scholars have discovered that speaking competence is made up of a number of elements. These include:

Pronunciation- the correct pronunciation of sounds of the target language, stress and intonation patterns in a manner that enables the speaker to be comprehended.

- Vocabulary - the presence and the accessibility of vocabulary items required to convey intended meanings in conditions of real-time communication.
- Grammar Learners acquire the skills of using morphosyntactic frames, which help them to produce speech in an accurate and understandable way.
- Interaction - the capacity to initiate, sustain, and terminate conversational interactions; to take and give turns; to respond to the contributions of the interlocutor; to deal with communication failures.
- Fluency- the capacity to speak fluently without interruption, roughness, and complexity in the flow of communication (Richards, 2006; Skehan, 2009)

These elements are mutually reliant. When a speaker is unable to find vocabulary promptly, he or she will have more pauses, which will impact fluency. Even a speaker with the correct grammar may not be able to maintain a conversation due to a lack of interactive skills. The teaching techniques that emphasize only one aspect individually, e.g., grammar accuracy, etc., without working on the others, result in the creation of learners who can perhaps pass written exams but who are nevertheless incapable of maintaining an actual conversation.

2.2.2 The Concept of Speaking Fluency

Fluency is one element of speaking competence that has received specific research interest since it is not only the most apparent indicator of speaking proficiency to real-world interlocutors, but also the most frequently overlooked aspect of speaking in formal language instructions

(Tavakoli & Hunter, 2018). Fluency, then, is what people first perceive when they are assessing a speaker: not the correctness of the grammar, but the flow of speech, how natural it sounds, and whether communication is maintained without breaking down too much.

Scholars have taken a number of theoretical approaches towards the issue of fluency. A first view sees fluency as mainly a question of speed, the rate at which a learner speaks, which is usually expressed in syllables or words per minute. A second perspective focuses on continuity - the lack of disruptive pausing, hesitation, and repair behaviors that disrupt the flow of spoken speech. A third, wider perspective sees fluency as communicative effectiveness - the capacity to make sense in and coherence of real interaction through language, irrespective of any surface-level speed (Richards, 2006; Tavakoli and Hunter, 2018).

The tripartite model of utterance fluency as defined by Skehan (2003) is the most popular operational framework used in contemporary studies, and as such, it clarifies utterance fluency on three quantifiable levels:

- Speed fluency - rate of speech production, often quantified in terms of speech rate (syllables/s) and articulation rate.
- Breakdown fluency - the rate and length of pauses and filled hesitations (uh and um) that disrupt the speech.

Repair fluency - How much speakers repeat, fix, or rephrase utterances in production.

This three-component model has become a common feature in the research and assessment setting since it enables the observation of fluency, which is measurable and can be compared across speakers and conditions (Tavakoli and Hunter, 2018; Kormos, 2014).

2.2.3 Indicators of Speaking Fluency

The empirical studies on speaking fluency have found a behavioral indicator that can discriminate between more and less fluent speakers in the second language and other language situations. These include:

Speed of speech: More fluent speakers utter more syllables in a time frame. Reduced speech rates in L2 speakers are usually indicative of the increased processing costs of language production in a less automatic system (Skehan, 2009).

Pause frequency and location: Pauses are made by all speakers; the difference between fluent and disfluent speech is the location of the pause. Fluent speakers stop at the boundaries of

clauses as a natural point of speech planning, whereas less fluent speakers stop in the middle of clauses, breaking the flow of speech. These pauses between the clauses indicate processing, but not discourse planning (Tavakoli and Hunter, 2018).

Phenomena of hesitation: Filled pauses (um, uh, er, etc.) and unfilled pauses are natural aspects of spontaneous speech, but their occurrence and location are indicators of fluency. Syntactic units with high rates of filled pauses indicate problems with retrieving lexicon or constructing grammar (Kormos, 2014).

Utterance continuity: Fluent speakers maintain longer periods of continuous speech without interruption before they pause. One of the most valid fluency measures in L2 studies is the mean length of run, which is the average number of syllables that are produced before a pause (Skehan, 2009).

Spontaneity: The most pedagogically interesting clue is perhaps the capacity to generate oral language with no preparation - the capability to answer a question or make a contribution to a discussion in the moment, without a prepared text or a memorized rule. The spontaneous speech production imposes the greatest demands on the language system of the learner and most clearly reflects the achieved fluency (Kormos, 2014).

2.2.4 Factors Affecting Speaking Fluency

The development of fluency is not automatic or passive. A number of interconnected issues determine the ease and speed with which speaking fluency is acquired by additional language learners.

One of the most repeatedly recorded inhibitors of speaking fluency is language anxiety. Horwitz (2010) developed the fact that the particular anxiety felt by many learners during speaking situations - as opposed to general performance anxiety - is caused by the social and evaluative requirements of oral language production. This fear heightens fear, lowers the rate of speech, and creates avoidance behaviors that curtail the amount and quality of spoken output. Teaching methods that minimize evaluative stress have always been linked to greater output of fluency-relevant output.

Confidence and self-efficacy have a complex interplay with anxiety. When a learner feels ready to communicate in the target language, he or she will speak more, make more attempts, and recover faster when communication fails (Horwitz, 2010). Confidence is fostered by effective

communicative experiences - by speaking and making oneself understood - which is what traditional grammar-centered teaching seldom offers.

The most direct determinant of the development of fluency is practice opportunities. In contrast to grammar knowledge, fluency cannot be learned by explanation or passive exposure; it must be practiced through real-time oral production under conditions that are as close as possible to real-life communication (Tavakoli and Hunter, 2018). The greater the opportunities learners get to engage in meaningful, interactive situations in which they must use the English language to produce spoken English, the more the language processing involved in speaking the language will become automatic and the more fluent the speech becomes.

The mode of teaching defines the occurrence of speaking practice as well as the nature of conditions that it generates to facilitate fluency development. All the above-mentioned approaches, such as task-based, interaction-centered, and storytelling-based, have been linked to higher fluency gains than structural, grammar-centered approaches (Skehan, 2009; Kirsch, 2016).

Classroom interaction - The amount and quality of verbal interaction among students and between students and their teacher is the social infrastructure in which fluency may be built. Classrooms where students listen to the teacher speak most of the time result in learners who are good listeners but cannot talk fluently, whereas classrooms where interaction is the primary mode of action give the opposite (Tavakoli & Hunter, 2018).

2.3 Dialogical Storytelling

2.3.1 The Concept of Storytelling in Language Teaching

The storytelling task is among the oldest communicative activities in which people engage and one of the most natural contexts for the use of extended spoken language. The storytelling approach is applied in language pedagogy at all levels of education, including the various cultures in which it is employed, for purposes of vocabulary learning, reading comprehension, listening development, and — this study especially focuses on — speaking.

The findings of Kirsch (2016) confirmed that sustained storytelling instruction in the first language classroom not only increased oral engagement in the language classroom, but also led students to use the language more meaningfully than structured exercises did, and to achieve vocabulary acquisition and communicative confidence, which the latter failed to deliver. Avraamidou and Osborne (2009) held that narrative is a uniquely powerful form of communication because it structures information in a way that is natural and motivating to the

human mind – beginning, middle, end – characters, events, meaning. They demonstrated that this narrative form allows learners to be motivated to write and listen to the language as a medium to convey meaning.

The function of storytelling in communicative language teaching is similar to what Richards (2006) calls fluency activity, which is an activity aimed at conveying meaning without paying attention to the form of language. Storytelling can place the speaking task in a story context, and thus shift the evaluative atmosphere away from more formal speaking tasks and provide opportunities for learners to generate longer, less stressful, and more spontaneous speech.

2.3.2 The Concept of Dialogical Storytelling

In language education, storytelling has been a longstanding practice, and the vast majority of it—and much of the scholarship—has been cast in terms of storytelling as a monologic endeavor, in which one person tells a story to an audience, whether it be that of an audience or a recording device. This model is the basis of the dialogical approach to storytelling. The dialogical approach to storytelling is radically different from this model. Avraamidou and Osborne (2009), after analysing narrative as a communicative form, found that dialogue is not a mere decoration for storytelling, but a change in its basic structure, an exchange of the roles of the narrator and interlocutor, in which each person constructs what the other has built.

There is not just a difference but a difference in cognition and language between traditional and dialogical storytelling:

Dimension	Traditional Storytelling	Dialogical Storytelling
Learner role	Primarily listener	Active co-author and respondent
Directionality	One speaker to the audience	Bidirectional, turn-based exchange
Primary focus	Narrative delivery	Dialogue, negotiation, and meaning-making
Cognitive demand	Planning and rehearsal	Real-time response and adaptation
Linguistic outcome	Extended monologue	Sustained interactive discourse

The dialogical storytelling activity is an activity that requires both participants to listen carefully, answer what the other has said, extend the story in a direction that is coherent to it, and keep the story logically together — in real time. Such demands better represent the conditions of authentic conversation than any monologic speaking task, and these conditions

have been correlated with fluency development in research (Tavakoli & Hunter, 2018; Kormos, 2014).

2.3.3 Features of Dialogical Storytelling

Dialogical storytelling as an instructional method and its unique appropriateness as a means of speaking fluency development can be traced to a few characteristics.

Dialogical storytelling is a structure in which interaction is the central element. Dialogical storytelling is not the same as the type of storytelling in which one student reads a text or delivers a speech. In dialogical storytelling, both participants must create language spontaneously in reaction to the other. It is an interactional structure that facilitates the real-time use of language that fluency research finds is the main factor that triggers automatic speech production (Skehan 2009).

Questioning and prompting are normal aspects of the dialogical storytelling exchange. Students pose questions to one another about what comes next, ask for clarifications or ask for elaborations, in real examples of using language for communication, not language for practice.

Dialogic storytelling is different from a task-based individual rendition because it involves collaborative meaning-making. If you need to make a story with another student, nobody writes the whole story; both people must adjust what they write to the other student's story. This type of collaboration reflects the negotiation of meaning, which Long (1996) described as an important aspect of communicative language development.

Dialogical narration involves equal participation from the learners: both are speaking and both are listening and the narration is developing over time. This balance is different from teacher-fronted activities, which involve one student speaking and many students listening, and result in a lot more speaking time per student.

Authentic communication happens when the dialogical story is genuinely informational asymmetrical, as neither student knows for sure where the other will go in the story, and both students must listen to the other to respond. The communicative need is a real need to communicate and is the most motivating and cognitively stimulating basis for language learning as it is a natural, non-instructed need (Avraamidou & Osborne, 2009).

2.3.4 Stages of Implementing Dialogical Storytelling

In an effective dialogic storytelling task in the language classroom, typically there are three phases:

Phase 1: Pre-Story Stage: Students are given the story prompt/scenario to work with to create their interactive story. This may be a picture or first sentence, a description of a character or a situational context. This section aims to grab the attention and spark ideas and language, reduce anxiety by making the activity 'real' to the participants, and provide a foundation for both sides to develop a story upon. Vocabulary words, first sentence or two of the story, or sentence starters (for lower-level students). Pre-story preparation does not control the interaction; it is one of the factors that can influence the interaction.

Phase 2 — Interactive Storytelling: This is the main phase of the activity. Students take turns to tell the story, add to the story, ask questions, and continue the story. Both students have to pay attention, react, and maintain the continuity of the co-constructed story, not knowing where the other student will concentrate the story. The role of the teacher is more facilitative than corrective and involves the movement, notes of language produced for future feedback, and brief assistance when it becomes uncommunicative. Emphasis is on quality and quantity of spoken output – sustained spoken interaction – not on formal accuracy.

In Phase 3, Post Story Discussion and Retelling, students participate in an interactive storytelling session, followed by a post-story discussion and retelling. This step can mean retelling the story to another pair, discussing what they were challenged with in the way that they communicated in English, talking about how they used words that were challenging for them to say, or how good their English was. The reflective stage not only enables the students to realize their weaknesses, but it also can make students feel their speaking achievement once again, which can increase their self-confidence in speaking in the future.

2.4 Theoretical Foundations

2.4.1 Sociocultural Theory (Vygotsky)

The most directly relevant theory you can use for understanding dialogical storytelling as some kind of language development tool is Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory. In this sociocultural theory, the core idea is that human cognitive growth, including language learning, is basically social: it gets shaped through interaction with other people, mediated by cultural tools and practices, and then later it becomes internal, like individual competence (Lantolf et al., 2015). One of the most pedagogically influential constructs coming out of this is the Zone of Proximal

Development, or ZPD, which Vygotsky described as the gap between what a learner can do by him or herself and what they can do with help from a more capable partner or peer. In language learning settings, the ZPD isn't only something like a space where teachers do their work. It is also, kind of, the very interaction itself, the process through which learning happens, even if at first it feels a bit indirect or uneven. Dialogical storytelling involves two students, who take turns enacting linguistic acts that neither could do alone: the extension of vocabulary, the maintenance of the complex narrative structure, and the negotiation of meaning and so on; and it is the performance of these acts together that leads to the development of capacities that become available individually later on (Lantolf et al., 2015).

This is a framework that directly supports the use of dialogical storytelling in teaching fluency in speaking. When the partners tell a story together, the ZPD emerges when both students are at a point where they cannot speak independently, but can do so with the assistance of the shared speaking task and the social presence of the partner. Language is internalized and fluent during repeated sessions in this scaffolded context.

2.4.2 Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)

The theory and methods that most directly, sort of, influenced the design of interactional language instruction since the 1970s are Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). Unlike formal accuracy or knowledge of structure, CLT seems to frame the main purpose of learning a language as communicative competence, meaning you can use language in the right way and also effectively, in real social circumstances (Richards, 2006).

The following are the key principles of CLT that are relevant in this study: language is for communication—all classroom activities should have a communicative purpose; interaction is the most important means of language learning—students learn language through interaction, not as an object being studied; and learner-centered learning should focus on the communicative needs of the students and lead the design of classroom activities.

All three principles are applied in dialogical storytelling: The activity is communicatively motivated (co-construction of a narrative with a partner), demands authentic communication (the story can not be created without real communicative interaction, without the speaker's utterances), and focuses the communicative action of the learner rather than the presentation of language forms by the teacher. Dialogical storytelling is an exemplary communicative activity in the CLT context, which is geared towards fluency (Richards, 2006).

2.4.3 The Interaction Hypothesis (Long)

The Interaction Hypothesis (1981, later refined in 1996) was proposed by Michael Long, who suggested that the acquisition of language takes place through face-to-face conversational interaction between the language learner and the interlocutor that involves negotiating meaning to make communication understandable. The hypothesis states that the process by which participants signal and repair meaning gaps in the discourse through requesting clarification, checking for confirmation, and checking for understanding is the key to language development in interaction (Long, 1996).

A central argument of the Interaction Hypothesis for the present study is that two-way communicative tasks, in which both participants possess information required by the other, are likely to be much more negotiating meaning tasks than one-way tasks, in which one speaker is providing information to a passive listener. However, in Long's original research, tasks involving storytelling and instruction giving (where one participant knows all the information) resulted in very little negotiation. As described in this study, dialogical storytelling is explicitly formulated as a two-way task, where neither student is fully in charge of telling the story; both have their own contribution to play, and both are called upon to negotiate the development of the story. This structure is exactly what the Interaction Hypothesis suggests will be most conducive to language learning (Long, 1996).

2.4.4 The Output Hypothesis (Swain)

The Output Hypothesis developed by Merrill Swain in the 1980s and 1990s from her research on French immersion students in Canada, asserts that a learner must receive comprehensible input, but also be provided with opportunities to make pushed output: language output in which learners must express meaning with precision, accuracy, and appropriateness under pressure in real communication (Swain, 1995).

According to Swain, there are three functions of output in second language acquisition. Noticing function refers to the process whereby the learner realizes (in the process of trying to communicate) that s/he cannot communicate what s/he wants — that there is a gap between what s/he wants to say and what he or she is able to say. This gap recognition is intended to point out to the learner certain aspects of the target language that are not made salient by the input. The hypothesis-testing function is when learners utter an expression and listen to the response from their conversational partner to decide if they said it successfully or not. The metalinguistic function is when the learner reflects on his/her own oral output, reflecting on language with language.

All three functions are activated by dialogical storytelling. Students identifying their lexical gap will realize on their own that they are missing certain words in the story, while students who give unclear contributions to the story will get feedback from interlocutors about their story content, and students who reflect on what they said in their story will experience metalinguistic awareness that supports the development of the language. A dialogical framework for the explanation of the role of L2 language production is therefore offered by Swain's (1995) explanation for why the DCS is more effective for L2 language development than receptive activities, because it puts students in a communicative situation in which they must produce language in.

2.5 The Relationship between Dialogical Storytelling and Speaking Fluency

From the four theoretical frameworks discussed above, the explanation of how dialogical storytelling is able to facilitate L2 speaking fluency among L4 learners is converging. This section combines that explanation by outlining the specifics of the approach through which it works.

More speaking time: The most obvious is that dialogical storytelling provides more individual speaking time than any activity that is teacher-fronted. If students are working in pairs for a class of 30, each will be talking for about 50% of the time (as opposed to about 1 sentence/lesson in a whole class question and answer time). In dialogical storytelling activities, the amount of oral output is itself a very important factor in the development of fluency (Tavakoli & Hunter, 2018).

Decreased evaluative load: The dialogical approach makes the speaking situation less evaluative. Students are not being tested on their grammar, but they are attempting to convey a story. The joint nature of the structure implies that the failure to communicate is not personal, and the fictional setting allows for linguistic doubt — if a student doesn't know a word, he or she can justify the hesitation by reasoning that it is a choice for the character in the story. Students will speak more, speak longer, and recover faster from breakdowns (Horwitz, 2010).

Greater access of vocabulary: When words are used in meaningful communicative contexts, words can be used repeatedly to improve automatic access of words, as is seen in dialogical storytelling across the various sessions. As learners have to hunt for the words that continue the co-constructed story, they are practicing exactly the kind of word retrieval strategies that fluent speech involves (Kirsch, 2016).

Greater spontaneity: The dialogical narration is an open-ended process, where neither the first learner can predict what the second one will add, nor the second can predict what the first will say, hence the semantic unpredictability of real dialogue. This uncertainty demands online language production and, with repeated practice, can become automatic, enabling fluent, spontaneous production (Kormos, 2014).

A natural language context: Storytelling as a natural linguistic context for language production. Grammar tasks can become repetitive and unmotivating for students, whereas motivating tasks are often narrative tasks because they have a story with stakes, characters, and outcomes, which matter (Avraamidou & Osborne, 2009). This motivational engagement continues the extended speaking effort needed to achieve fluency and differentiates dialogical storytelling from mechanical, non-communative students' speaking activities.

2.6 Previous studies

2.6.1 Studies related to Storytelling and Speaking Skills

There is a large amount of literature focused on the connection between storytelling-based learning and acquiring speaking skills at various levels of education and in diverse cultures.

In a research carried out at Northern Border University in Saudi Arabia, Eissa (2019) examined the possibility of digital storytelling to reverse a long-standing trend among EFL students: good grammar skills combined with the failure to communicate fluently in English in real life. Applying a pre-test/post-test design and university learners, Eissa discovered that a teaching course that was based on digital storytelling resulted in quantifiable changes in the general speaking performance of the students, such as improvements in vocabulary use, sentence construction, and confidence. The paper reached the conclusion that changing the traditional methods of teaching that involve the use of storytelling techniques directly positively impacted the results in EFL speaking (Eissa, 2019).

Arroba and Acosta (2021) conducted a study in Ecuador and explored the concept of authentic digital storytelling as an alternative teaching method in EFL university classrooms. Their mixed-methods research started with a survey that indicated that the teachers, as well as the students, considered the current classroom activities to be inauthentic and not conducive to the creation of real communicative ability. After an intervention depending on real-life storytelling, the researchers discovered a dramatic boost in the speaking abilities of students judged in pre- and post-test exercises on rubric-evaluated tasks with regard to organization, language quality, and clarity of message. They have observed, though, that the readiness of the teachers to

embrace innovative communicative strategies was a precondition to successful implementation (Arroba & Acosta, 2021).

In a quasi-experimental study, Nair and Md Yunus (2022) used the Toontastic 3D digital storytelling application to examine how it enhanced the speaking performance of primary school students in rural areas and had limited exposure to real-life English practices. The experiment used pre and post-tests to measure fluency, accuracy, and pronunciation. Findings indicated that the speaking performance of the students who used the storytelling app improved statistically, and the greatest gains were made in fluency. The authors explained this by the reproducible and low-pressure oral production, which the tool made possible (Nair & Md Yunus, 2022).

Kirsch (2016) analysed the experience of a primary school teacher in London implementing storytelling in German language lessons over a long-term period with Year 6 students (ages 10-11) who included English as an Additional Language learners with ethnic minority backgrounds. The research reported that storytelling produced recurrent, meaningful chances of using spoken language that facilitated vocabulary learning and motivated students to learn the target language. Notably, Kirsch noted that the participatory aspects of storytelling sessions, such as mime, gesture, and teacher-student interaction, had greater sustained oral engagement compared to written assignments (Kirsch, 2016).

In a study published by Heliyon, Benabbes and Abu Taleb (2024) tested the impact of storytelling on language and social skill development in French-as-a-foreign-language classes in an Arab educational setting. Their results indicated that the storytelling activities increased the willingness to speak among students and decreased inhibition, which is usually related to the production of a foreign language. They also reported an increase in narrative coherence and vocabulary use, which substantiates the hypothesis that storytelling generates a communicative environment where learners generate more continuous and structured spoken language than in grammar-based tasks (Benabbes and Abu Taleb, 2024).

2.6.2 Dialogic Learning and Oral Fluency

Studies of dialogic methods of language learning, in which the interaction between learners is the focus of the design of the activity, have repeatedly associated this instructional mode with quantifiable gains in speaking fluency.

Tavakoli and Hunter (2018) examined the awareness of the second language teachers on speaking fluency and how they address it in the classroom. Their results, which were founded

on a mixed-methods research on L2 teachers, indicated that fluency had been commonly confused as a loose aim of general free-production and not as a measurable construct with quantifiable aspects -speed, breakdown and repair. They discovered that activities that specifically target fluency development were not frequently offered by the teachers, and generic speaking practice was frequently confused with fluency development. The research demanded activities based on dialogues to make sustained interactive speaking the core of teaching and suggested that fluency is built upon sustained chances to interact in real time by speaking instead of through controlled practices (Tavakoli and Hunter, 2018).

In a foundational exposition of the treatment of speech production and acquisition of a second language, Kormos (2014) showed how oral fluency is not an innate quality but an achievement-based ability related to the automaticity of the language retrieval process under the pressure of communication. Kormos demonstrated that learners who undergo a sustained dialogic interaction -tasks that involve them formulating responses, negotiation, and sustaining discourse in real-time-acquire the type of processing automaticity on which fluent speech is based. In contrast, tasks of monologic type provide the learners with opportunities to plan and monitor themselves without imitating the requirements of real talk (Kormos, 2014).

Skehan (2009) created a model of resource allocation of second language performance that demonstrated that learners allocate limited cognitive resources to accuracy, complexity, and fluency in speaking tasks. His work discovered that dialogic tasks, i.e. those in which the existence of an interlocutor imposes the pressure of real-time communication, resulted in various outcomes in fluency compared to monologic tasks, the interactive requirements of the dialogic activity compelling learners to focus on the communicative flow rather than the correctness. The immediate classroom design implications of these results are as follows: the tasks that approximate actual conversational interaction result in greater fluency-relevant practice as compared to controlled, single-speaker tasks (Skehan, 2009).

The Iranian EFL research on the dynamic assessment and oral fluency (Safdari and Fathi, 2020, as cited in recent literature) investigated how interactionist Dynamic Assessment based on the idea of dialogic cooperation of Vygotsky influenced the development of oral fluency of EFL learners. The researchers discovered that the mediation provided as part of the continuous dialogue between the teacher and the learner, instead of providing it as corrective interruptions, led to a more sustained acquisition of fluency and to a sense that the experience was less disruptive by the learners to their speech. The study highlighted that the dialogic interaction

based on the Zone of Proximal Development framework may be viewed as the context and the process of developing fluency.

In a pioneering review of research on foreign and second language anxiety, Horwitz (2010) determined that speaking a second or foreign language is a highly anxiety-provoking situation faced by most learners among the four skills. She showed that language anxiety in oral production is not a character trait, but a contextual reaction to the social and appraisal demands of oral production. Teaching methods that decrease the intensity of evaluation - by placing speaking within group, storytelling tasks - have been observed to decrease this anxiety and, as a result, to elevate the amount and quality of spoken language (Horwitz, 2010).

2.6.3 Multilingual and EFL Learners and Speaking Development

The studies of speaking development in the case of multilingual students and those studying in additional-language situations show that there is a particular set of challenges and opportunities which are not found in the studies related to monolingual or second-language students.

Cenoz (2013) was a thorough review of studies on third or second language acquisition in the context of multilingualism. She demonstrated that although multilingual learners introduce some metalinguistic benefits to other language learning - more elaborated learning strategies, increased intercultural repertory, and heightened awareness of language as a system - they also encounter higher cognitive loads because of having to deal with multiple language systems at once. In oral production, in particular, these requirements are reflected in the increased language transfer rate, the increased frequency of pauses, and the inability to acquire automatic access to lexicon in the 2nd language. The theoretical basis of Cenoz work is the explanation of the reason why speaking fluency can be especially problematic among learners such as Buqata learners (Cenoz, 2013).

Cummins (2017) explored the experiences of minoritized students, such as those representing minority language communities, in education, claiming that additive models of language teaching, in which additional language is seen as a resource, but not a deficit, are both valid and effective. He has analyzed that students with minority language backgrounds learn more languages on the basis of their entire linguistic repertoire and when their learning of an additional language is based on their previous language experiences. In the case of students who study English as a second language in a locality such as Buqata, where Arabic, Hebrew, and Aramaic all come before English in the language acquisition paradigm, the paradigm

proposed by Cummins implies that the process of acquisition should not be a contest between the two languages; instead, it must be a continuation (Cummins, 2017).

In a study that was published in the Arab World English Journal, Al-Amri (2020) explored digital storytelling as a communicative language teaching approach in EFL classrooms in the Arabian Gulf setting. The research question addressed how much the activities based on telling stories could be in line with the principles of communicative language teaching and whether they resulted in more authentic spoken interaction than traditional ones. Results indicated that in storytelling tasks, students produced significantly more student-initiated speech and more extended turns in conversation as compared to grammar taught by the teacher. Al-Amri held that storytelling is the most readily available and authentic communicative practice in the classroom of EFL learners whose classroom is their main place of English use (Al-Amri, 2020).

In a systematic review in Sustainability, Nair and Yunus (2021) summarized the results of several investigations on digital storytelling and speaking skill development and found that storytelling-based teaching consistently leads to a decrease in the level of speaking anxiety, the promotion of learner autonomy, and the possibility of peer communication that is not possible with more conventional tasks. The review observed that these effects were especially noticeable in situations where learners were exposed to limited exposure to the English language beyond the classroom - a situation that closely resembles the one faced by students in Buqata where English continues to be a school subject, but not a language used in everyday life (Nair and Yunus, 2021).

In an Omani research article, published in the Frontiers in Education, Salih and colleagues (2024) evaluated the efficiency of clustered digital materials in improving speaking proficiency of EFL students in tertiary education. The analysis revealed that speaking proficiency increased significantly when students worked with real materials that called on collaborative spoken response such as discussion, retelling, and commentary activities as opposed to a control condition when students worked with regular textbook activities. The paper noted that multilingual learners in the Gulf settings were similar to other EFL groups: they lack authentic speaking experiences, experience high-stakes assessment pressure, and classrooms, which traditionally emphasize written over oral language (Salih et al., 2024).

2.6.4 Research Gap

The above reviewed studies have yielded useful evidence in the three overlapping lines of inquiry. Studies on storytelling and speaking have continually shown that narrative based

teaching enhances oral performance in EFL and foreign language situations. Studies of dialogic learning and oral fluency prove that prolonged interactive speaking (where the learner is required to listen, respond, and negotiate meaning in real time) offers more practice in fluency-relevant features than do monologic or controlled tasks. And studies of multilingual students affirm that there are cognitive and affective difficulties in speaking a second language that should be taught specifically.

Nonetheless, an examination of this literature shows that there is a gap. No published research has analyzed the impact of dialogical storytelling, as opposed to either general storytelling or digital storytelling, on the development of speaking fluency among learners in which English is a fourth language, and where Arabic, Hebrew and Aramaic all have a higher position in the language profile of the learner. The research papers analyzed in this paper are carried out mainly in second-language (ELS) or third-language (EFL) or bilingual settings. Specific issues that confront a learner who needs to operate four language systems and speak fluent English as the most foreign of the four, have not been specifically researched.

Moreover, there is no specific focus on the Druze community of Buqata in the Golan Heights, although this is a linguistically complex and pedagogically unique context, within the applied linguistics literature concerning speaking fluency development. The cultural, social, and educational particularities of this community, such as the distinctive multilingualism of the community and the specific stresses of the Grade 11 in the Israeli English curriculum, are such that simple generalization of the existing literature is not reliable.

This research fills these two gaps. It evaluates the possibility of dialogical storytelling to induce statistically significant gains in speaking fluency in Grade 11 students in Buqata, where English is explicitly used as a fourth language, and where the intervention is embedded in the context of the particular sociolinguistic factors of the community.

Chapter Three: Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The study was quasi-experimental research design that aimed to investigate the impact of dialogical storytelling on speaking fluency of Grade 11 English as a fourth language learners. Quasi-experimental designs are used when the research is intended to examine the effects of a treatment in different groups in an actual educational setting, and the researchers are unable to

randomly assign participants to groups (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Randomization of individual students to experimental and control groups would complicate logistics and ethics and disrupt existing school class structures in schools. This constraint is addressed by the quasi-experimental design, which deals with intact classroom groups, the results of which can be translated to real world settings where experiments are not conducted.

Two groups, one experimental group where instruction was given using dialogical storytelling and a control group with teacher-centred instruction were compared. The same speaking assessment instrument was used at pre- and post-testing for both groups. The use of the pre-test/post-test design allows tracking of change within each group over time and the comparison of the magnitude of the changes between groups. It also enables the researcher to establish a causal relationship between the independent variable (dialogical storytelling) and the dependent variable (speaking fluency) in terms of the observed changes of the latter because other instructional conditions between the two groups are kept constant.

3.2 Participants

The study was conducted with 40 students in Grade 11 from a multilingual setting in the town of Buqata, the Golan Heights, in which English is a fourth language taught on top of the already acquired languages of Arabic, Hebrew and Aramaic. There were 20 students in the experimental group and 20 students in the control group.

These were chosen based on availability and within the same level of education, so as to make sure that all the participants had broadly comparable language proficiency backgrounds, age ranges and instructional histories. This method is commonly used in quasi-experimental research conducted in the classroom setting and is suitable for studies that seek to manage for pre-existing group differences rather than to make inferences to a broader population (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The homogeneity of the sample was further supported by having all participants instructed in English for a similar length of time and in a similar school system.

Equivalency of the two groups was confirmed with the pre-test scores that are obtained prior to any instructional intervention. If there were any pre-test differences between groups which would be statistically significant, this would have been taken into account in the analysis and would not support the interpretation that post-test differences were due to the intervention and not to pre-existing ability gaps.

3.3 Instruments

3.3.1 Speaking Test

The major assessment tool was a speaking performance test, which was also given at the beginning and end of the intervention, to determine changes in students' oral fluency in both programs. The test was designed to elicit spontaneous, extended spoken responses as opposed to rehearsed and scripted responses, in a realistic, communicative environment.

The task design involved assembling a verbal story from a series of 4–6 visual images given in sequence. Students analysed the picture sequence and created a story by summarising what was happening in the pictures, linking the pictures together in a coherent sequence, interpreting their meaning of what was happening the pictures and predicting what might happen in the sequence to come. This monologic narrative part was followed by an interactive part, the examiner presented a series of guiding questions that required students to expand their reply, substantiate their interpretation, or continue their story based on new information. This two-part format (narrative production followed by guided dialogue) was purposeful; it measured the learner's ability to produce a narrative as well as his/her ability to respond and adapt during the real-time listening activity, the two dimensions specifically targeted by the dialogical storytelling intervention.

For several reasons, a picture-based approach was chosen as the method for elicitation. The reduction of the burden of cognitive preparation, arising from the visual stimuli, is particularly advantageous for learners with four language systems because, when the visual stimuli provide a concrete referent for speech, students can focus their cognitive resources on speech production rather than on topic preparation (Kormos, 2014). Picture prompts also provide comparable speaking opportunities for all participants because each student is given the same visual input, making student scores across individuals and time points more comparable (Tavakoli & Hunter, 2018). The task format has been proven to be reliable for L2 speaking assessment research and has been employed to produce L2 speaking samples of different levels of fluency in a variety of language learning situations.

The set of picture sequences used for the post-test was different to the one used in the pre-test, so as to not give any advantage of task familiarity, but to keep the level of difficulty equivalent. Both sets were administered in the pilot and reviewed to ensure that they produced similar quality and quantity of verbal responses.

3.3.2 Speaking Assessment Rubric

An analytic speaking rubric that was specifically created for the purposes of this study was used to score student performance on the pre-test and post-test. The rubric aimed to reflect the multi-dimensionality of speech performance in a communicative context and to be closely aligned to the theoretical and pedagogical goals of dialogical teaching of storytelling.

The rubric evaluates 4 dimensions each of which has a weighting of 25% of the total score (100 points in total):

Fluency (25%): This dimension is observed in terms of the smoothness and continuity of the spoken output, speech rate, frequency and placement of pauses, use of filled hesitations, and holding on to spoken production without excessive breakdown for longer periods of speech. It maps on to the research literature on L2 utterance fluency identified under the speed, breakdown, and repair dimensions (Tavakoli & Hunter, 2018; Skehan, 2009).

Interaction (25%): This dimension evaluates how responsive the student is to the examiner's questions, how well he/she takes turns with the examiner, and his/her ability to respond to the examiner's questions in an interactive way rather than just giving a lecture. It shows the interactional needs of dialogue-based narratives and the focus given in this study on conversational interaction in the development of fluency (Long, 1996).

Coherence (25%): This dimension evaluates the organization of spoken output — whether students link ideas to each other, keep the text in a narrative structure, employ the right discourse markers, and produce speech that is coherent and not a string of random utterances.

Communicative Effectiveness (25%): This dimension evaluates the overall effectiveness of the student's communication — i.e., did he or she communicate clearly and appropriately to the listener, even if some minor errors occurred in form. It is in line with the communicative competence framework and the principle of CLT which states that the main purpose of using language is to communicate meaningfully (Richards, 2006).

These four dimensions were chosen due to the fact that they encompass most of the dimensions of spoken performance that are pertinent to the intervention being studied. Fluency is the dependent variable of the study, while the broad communicative framework in which it works is the dimensions of interaction, coherence, and communicative effectiveness developed in the dialogical storytelling activities. The rubric was pre-tested for the age appropriateness and suitability of the study's goals.

3.4 Procedures

This study was undertaken in three consecutive stages.

Phase One: Pre-Test

All 40 subjects (experimental and control groups) took the same speaking pre-test before any instructional treatment was administered in standardized conditions. They evaluated each student according to a personal assessment. The amount of time allowed per student, the instruction provided and the physical testing environment remained the same for all sessions. The picture sequence was given to the students, together with some verbal instruction explaining the task, and a short preparation time before speaking was started.

The researcher used the four dimension rubric to score the response while it was being written. Inter-rater reliability was determined by having a second rater independently score a sample of the responses. Before the intervention started, pre-test scores for both groups were compared to ensure baseline equivalence.

Phase Two: Instructional Treatment

The intervention was conducted over a specified period of instruction in which the two groups were given different kinds of instruction.

The experimental group engaged in a series of guided dialogical storytelling sessions. During each session, students were guided to work in pairs or small groups, co-constructing a story through a picture, a beginning sentence or a situation scenario provided. The activity was followed in three stages which are in accordance with the theoretical framework, the first was the preparatory phase: activating the vocabulary and the context, second was the interactive phase of storytelling, students taking turns to construct the story, and third was the reflection and discussion phase at the end of the activity. Throughout, the teacher's role was facilitative: asking open-ended questions; offering vocabulary support when asked; encouraging students to build on students' ideas and comments. Not much formal error correction occurred during the story itself, as it was designed to be fluent.

These were taught to the control group in conventional, teacher centred ways during the same time. Classes were mainly grammar explanation, vocabulary presentation and textbook exercises. Speech activities were short, and when present, not in the form of dialogue or narration. Instruction was not lessened in either quality or quantity for the control group, but

simply maintained from previous instruction to both groups, thus eliminating the possibility that any post-test differences would be due to differential instructional time.

The researcher made informal observations in the classroom throughout the instructional period to observe students' involvement in the lesson, lesson fidelity, and the students' engagement. These observations were made in the field notes and were not used formally as data for analysis but were used to put the quantitative results into context.

Phase Three: Post-Test

At the end of the teaching period, both groups took the post test in speaking. The structure, directions for the task, timing and scoring were the same as used in the pre-test. To reduce the effects of task familiarity on performance, a different set of picture sequences was used that were of the same difficulty level. Responses were scored with the same rubric for four dimensions and a second rater scored a subset of responses for scoring reliability.

3.4 Data Analysis

The scores for the pre-test and post-test were arranged by group and by rubric dimension. A student's score for each of the four dimensions was out of 25, and was added together to get a score for the total speaking of 100. Before any statistical analysis, all scoring was done.

Two steps were used in the analysis.

For both groups descriptive statistics were computed at both time points. The mean scores and standard deviations for the total score of the speaking test and for each dimension of the rubric were calculated separately for each experimental and control group. These data gave a snapshot of the groups' performance and a first indication whether and how scores differed from pre-test to post-test.

Any difference in the means observed was tested for statistical significance at the $\alpha \leq 0.05$ level using inferential statistics. Two varieties of t-test were used.

In order to determine within each group if there were improvement, a paired-samples t-test was performed on the mean scores from the pre-test and post-test scores. This test directly answers the second research hypothesis, which is whether the experimental group demonstrated a statistically significant difference between the two tests as a consequence of the dialogical story telling intervention.

The post-test scores of the experimental and the control groups were compared using independent-samples t-test to find their difference in the post intervention speaking performance. This test is designed to answer the first research hypothesis -- whether there is a statistically significant difference between the two groups on the post test.

All statistical calculations were done with the SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). Effect sizes were computed along with significance values to help provide a more complete picture of the practical size of differences observed, as statistical significance does not necessarily mean educational significance.

Chapter Four: Results

4.1 Introduction

The data from 40 Grade 11 students (20 students per group) were collected using a pre-test and post-test in the form of speaking performance. The quantitative data were obtained from 40 grade 11 students (20 students per group) using a pre-test and post-test in speaking performance. They were evaluated on four areas: fluency, interaction, coherence, and communicative effectiveness, rated from 0 to 25 and totaling 100 points per student. It was conducted in two phases: (1) descriptive statistics to describe group performance for each testing phase and (2) inferential statistics to test the two null hypotheses of this study. All analyses were performed at a significance level of $\alpha < .05$ and effect sizes (Cohen's d) were calculated along with p-values in order to determine practical significance.

4.2 Descriptive Statistics

Tables 4.1 and 4.2 present the mean scores (M) and standard deviations (SD) for both groups across all four dimensions, at the pre-test and post-test stages, respectively.

Table 4. 1: Descriptive Statistics — Pre-test

Dimension	Control Group (n = 20)		Experimental Group (n = 20)	
	M	SD	M	SD
Fluency	62.30	3.88	62.80	4.64

Interaction	64.15	4.45		63.35	4.98
Coherence	63.90	4.59		63.05	3.98
Communicative Effectiveness	61.70	4.28		61.70	4.01
Total	252.05	9.40		250.90	8.61

Table 4. 2: Descriptive Statistics — Post-test

Dimension	Control Group (n = 20)			Experimental Group (n = 20)	
	M	SD		M	SD
Fluency	66.25	3.80		78.70	5.30
Interaction	68.55	4.56		77.25	6.38
Coherence	68.10	4.48		78.50	5.40
Communicative Effectiveness	65.60	4.54		76.65	4.57
Total	268.50	9.33		311.10	12.65

The baseline scores of the two groups were the same for all four dimensions in the pre-test. The mean total score for the control group was 252.05 (SD = 9.40) and for the experimental group was 250.90 (SD = 8.61). The difference in this point (on a 100-point scale) was only 0.4 points, suggesting that both groups had the same level of English at the beginning of the study, so that the difference at the end of the study is not a pre-existing gap between the two groups, but is instead due to the effect of the intervention.

The outcomes of the post-test were significantly different from the teaching. The mean total score for the control group increased from 252.05 to 268.50, or 16.45 points—the same amount of improvement that is generally seen in the total score of the students in the overall instruction

that they receive. The experimental group, on the other hand, went from 250.90 to 311.10, with an increase of 60.20 points. This is equivalent to 3.7 times as great as the increase in the control group, and similar for all four dimensions of assessment, suggesting a broad and sustained effect of the dialogical storytelling intervention.

In terms of the individual dimensions, there were the greatest increases among the experimental group in fluency (15.90 mean points) and coherence (15.45 mean points).

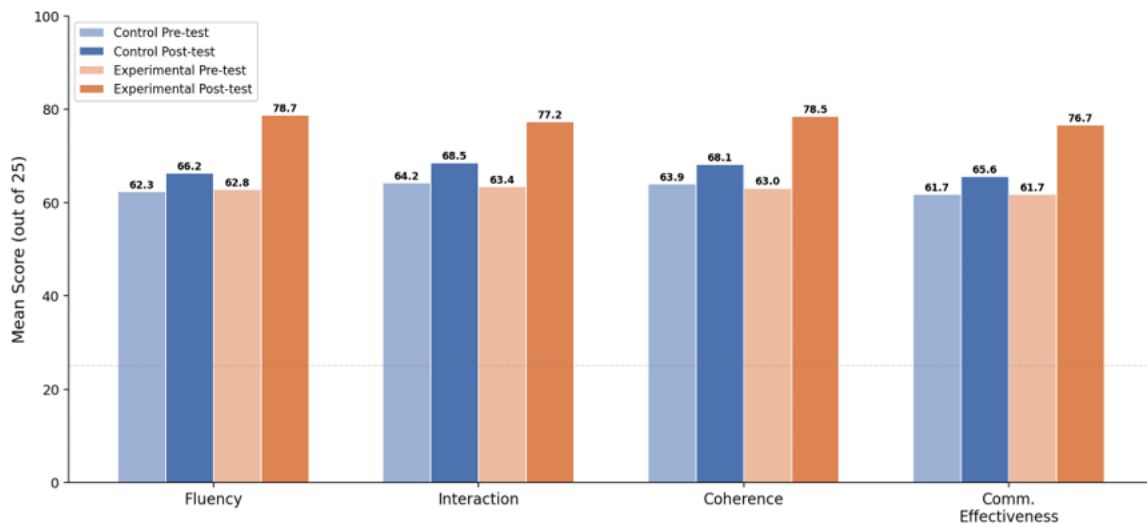


Figure 4. 1: Mean pre-test and post-test scores by dimension and group.

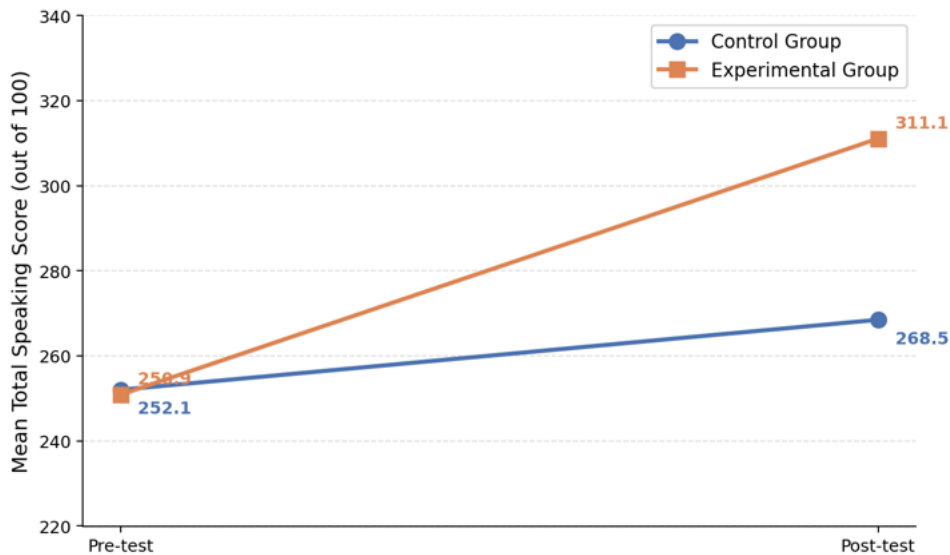


Figure 4. 2: Mean total speaking scores across testing phases by group.

4.3 Inferential Statistics

4.3.1 Hypothesis One — Independent-Samples t-test

H₀₁: There are no statistically significant differences at the level of significance ($\alpha \leq .05$) between the mean scores of the experimental group and the mean scores of the control group in the post-speaking fluency test.

To test the first null hypothesis, an independent-samples t-test was conducted comparing the post-test mean scores of the experimental group and the control group on each dimension and on the total score. The results are presented in Table 4.3.

Table 4. 3: Independent-Samples t-test Results — Post-test (Experimental vs. Control)

Dimension	M (Ctrl)	SD (Ctrl)	M (Exp)	SD (Exp)	t(38)	p	Cohen's d
Fluency	66.25	3.80	78.70	5.30	8.538	< 0.001	2.700
Interaction	68.55	4.56	77.25	6.38	4.961	< 0.001	1.569
Coherence	68.10	4.48	78.50	5.40	6.624	< 0.001	2.095
Communicative Effectiveness	65.60	4.54	76.65	4.57	7.677	< 0.001	2.428
Total	268.50	9.33	311.10	12.65	12.117	< 0.001	3.832

Cohen's d: small $\geq .20$, medium $\geq .50$, large $\geq .80$.

All four dimensions and the total score gave statistically significant differences between the experimental and control groups with all p-values being below .001 for the independent-samples t-test. Thus, the first null hypothesis is rejected.

The overall post-test comparison was significant, $t(38) = 12.117$, $p < .001$, Cohen's $d = 3.832$, a very large effect size. The between-group differences for fluency were the greatest ($d = 2.700$), communicative effectiveness ($d = 2.428$), coherence ($d = 2.095$), and interaction ($d = 1.569$).

Effect sizes in this range are not only statistically significant, but also actually meaningful. When a Cohen's d is greater than 2.0, then the mean score of the students in the experimental group is higher than the mean score of the students in the control group in that dimension, which provides education-level significance to the intervention in addition to what significance testing alone can provide.

Figure 5. Radar Chart: Post-test Scores by Dimension and Group

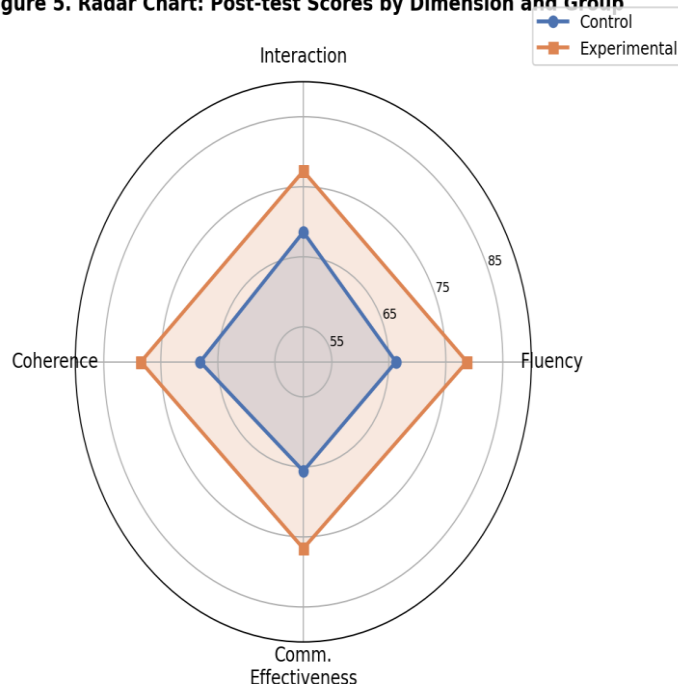


Figure 4. 3:Radar chart comparing post-test dimension means by group.

4.3.2 Hypothesis Two — Paired-Samples t-test (Experimental Group)

H₀₂: There are no statistically significant differences at the level of significance ($\alpha \leq .05$) between the mean scores of the experimental group in the pre- and post-speaking fluency test, due to the use of dialogical storytelling.

To test the second null hypothesis, a paired-samples t-test was conducted within the experimental group, comparing pre-test and post-test scores on each dimension and on the total score. Table 4 presents the results.

Dimension	M (Pre)	SD (Pre)	M (Post)	SD (Post)	Mean Gain	t(19)	p
Fluency	62.80	4.64	78.70	5.30	+15.90	23.647	< 0.001
Interaction	63.35	4.98	77.25	6.38	+13.90	22.288	< 0.001
Coherence	63.05	3.98	78.50	5.40	+15.45	23.450	< 0.001
Communicative Effectiveness	61.70	4.01	76.65	4.57	+14.95	20.766	< 0.001

Dimension	M (Pre)	SD (Pre)	M (Post)	SD (Post)	Mean Gain	t(19)	p
Total	250.90	8.61	311.10	12.65	+60.20	42.646	< 0.001

Pre-to-post comparisons were made for each dimension within the experimental group using the paired-samples t-test, which showed very significant differences ($p < .001$) on all dimensions. The second null hypothesis is thus rejected.

The total speaking score increased from a pre-test mean of 250.90 to a post-test mean of 311.10, yielding a mean gain of 60.20 points, $t(19) = 42.646$, $p < .001$. The largest absolute gains were made in fluency (M gain = 15.90 points), coherence (15.45), communicative effectiveness (14.95), and interaction (13.90) at the dimension level. The overall pattern of progress in each of the four skills indicates that the dialogical storytelling resulted in a general improvement in students' speaking rather than a specific improvement in one area.

The control group also had statistically significant pre-to-post gains on all dimensions, for comparison, as the gains were due to general instructional effects during the study period. However, the size of the gains made by the control group was significantly smaller, with an average total gain of just 16.45 points, as opposed to the experimental group's average total gain of 60.20 points. This ratio validates the value of the improvement seen in the experimental group as being due to the experimental treatment and not due to the passage of time or general instruction.

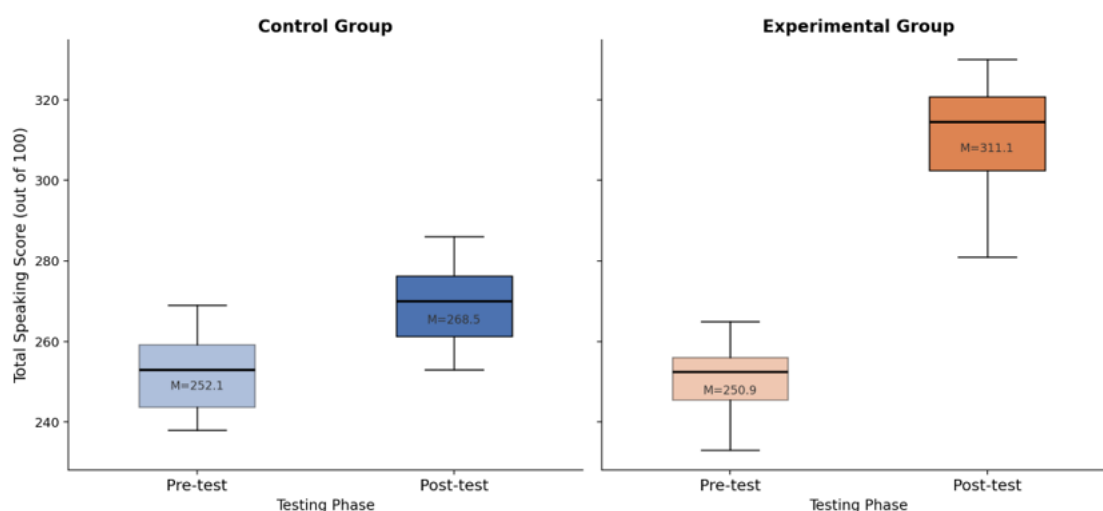


Figure 4. 4: Box plot distributions of total speaking scores pre-test and post-test by group.

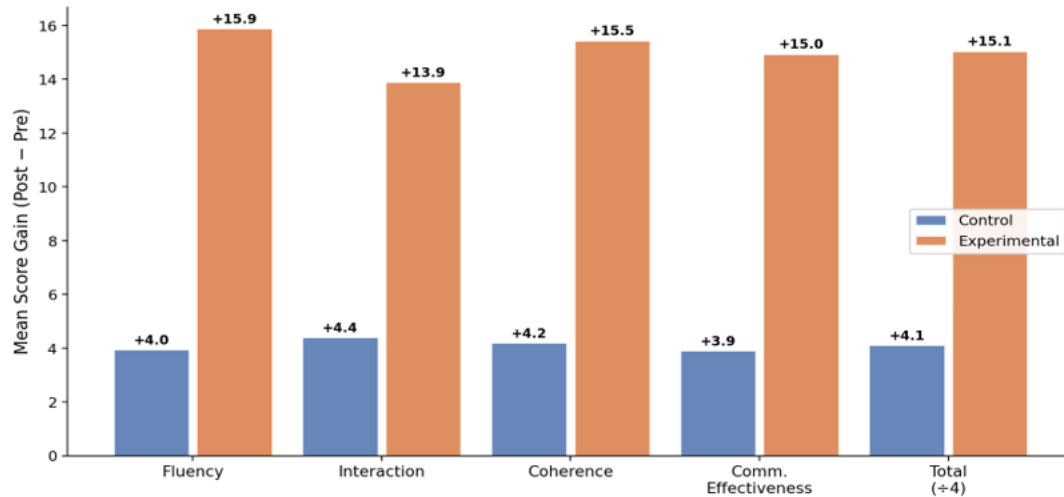


Figure 4. 5: Mean score gains per dimension and group (Post – Pre).

4.4 Summary of findings

Table 4. 4: Summary of Hypothesis Testing Results

Hypothesis	Test Used	Result	Decision
H ₀₁ : No significant difference between the Experimental and Control groups on post-test	Independent-samples t-test	t(38) = 12.117, p < .001, d = 3.832	Rejected
H ₀₂ : No significant pre-to-post improvement in Experimental group	Paired-samples t-test	t(19) = 42.646, p < .001	Rejected

Overall, the statistical results show that dialogical storytelling is effective for teaching the speaking skills of EFL learners as a fourth language. Both null hypotheses were rejected at the $\alpha < .001$ level with effect sizes (Cohen's d values > 2.0 for individual dimensions and > 4.0 for the total score) among the most practically significant results reported in all speaking intervention research literature.

The pattern of results is consistent within the study: all four dimensions of the study were assessed, the gains in the experimental group were large and consistent, and there were modest gains in the control group, which were due to general instruction. The results are consistent with the theoretical predictions of Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, Long's Interaction

Hypothesis and Swain's Output Hypothesis, all of which suggest that sustained, interactive, and meaning-oriented oral output — such as dialogical storytelling — will foster fluency development more effectively than conventional teacher-centered instruction.

Chapter Five: Discussion

5.1 Discussion

The present study aimed to determine if dialogical storytelling would lead to significant gains in achieving fluency in the speaking proficiency of Grade 11 students in Buqata, Golan Heights, in which English is a fourth language. The outcome was clear-cut. Both null hypotheses were rejected at the level of $< .001$ and the effect sizes that resulted (Cohen's $d = 3.832$ for total post-test comparison) ranked this intervention among the most practically significant findings in speaking fluency research. The results are discussed in terms of the four dimensions of assessment in the following sections and are placed in the context of the existing empirical and theoretical literature.

The biggest improvements were in the experimental group on the measure of fluency, where there was a mean change of 15.90 points and a Cohen's d of 2.700 between group means. This finding directly supports the main hypothesis of the study, which is that fluency cannot be gained by merely passively learning language forms, but must be repeatedly exposed to language forms in real-time spoken production in real communication situations, as proposed by Tavakoli and Hunter (2018). Dialogical storytelling, in which speaking is embedded in an emergent, co-constructed story that is not predictable by either student, does just this.

The dialogic speaking tasks proved to be extremely effective at imposing the real-time processing constraints that engender automaticity of lexical and grammatical knowledge, as shown by Kormos (2014) in comparison to monologic speaking tasks. The gains in fluency observed in the present study are in line with this: Students in the experimental group were asked in several sessions to recall words, keep syntactic structures and maintain the coherence of a narration in the presence of an active interlocutor. The control group, which was taught primarily using teacher explanation and text-based exercises, did not have a similar sustained, interactive output and so the 3.95-point gain in fluency is much less.

The second largest gain was that of the experimental group (M gain = 15.45, d = 2.095), which is relevant and interesting because the study was conducted in the fourth language context. The metacognitive and/or linguistic task of organizing thoughts across longer turns of speech is compounded by the task of managing the organization of such thoughts in relation to the learner's broader sentence-level grammar structures, and further complicated when several language systems are in competition for activation (Cenoz, 2013). It seems that the post-story discussion time, in which students analysed and re-told the co-constructed story, was effective in developing this capacity. This is consistent with Swain's (1995) Output Hypothesis, which suggests that metalinguistic reflection stimulated by speaking activities, such as noticing the things one can't say and how to do it, also contributes to language development.

The communicative effectiveness dimension showed an increase of 14.95 points in the experimental group (d = 2.428) while the control group showed an increase of 3.90 points. This dimension judged the effectiveness of the student's communication, in the sense of whether he or she was able to clearly communicate his or her intended meaning to the listener; it is perhaps the most practically relevant dimension for the student's ability to communicate in authentic contexts. The difference seen between groups on this dimension is quite large, indicating that the dialogical storytelling has been able to change the students' orientation towards English language communication from formal, accuracy-oriented to communicatively-oriented, and to be understood rather than correct. This change is key to Communicative Language Teaching as postulated by Richards (2006) and is reflected in the data, suggesting that the intervention was effective and congruent with the principles of CLT.

The gain was smallest in the experimental group (M gain = 13.90, d = 1.569), but was still very high, and the size could be considered very large by conventional standards. The modest difference in effect compared to fluency and coherence makes this effect theoretically interpretable: interaction requires more than the language production skills of the student, it also involves turn-taking, responsiveness, and social regulation of dialogue — skills that may take longer to develop for students who have had little or no experience with sustained spoken interaction within a natural English context. According to Long (1996), the process of negotiating meaning (how interactive speaking leads to language acquisition) is a gradual process, and the effects of this process will be cumulative as learners learn strategies to manage communication breakdowns. Considering this limitation, the substantial improvement seen here suggests that the dialogic approach to task design is effective, even with a relatively brief intervention.

In a similar study in Saudi Arabia, Eissa (2019) discovered that the use of DST had a profound effect on the EFL speaking proficiency of university students in terms of vocabulary, pronunciation, and communicative self-confidence. Contrary to the study of Eissa (2001), which investigated a control group of EFL learners, the present study confirms these results in a secondary school environment and brings them to the learners who are at the end of the intervention period, dealing with three languages before their L2. Remarkably, similar pedagogical results were obtained in this more complex language context, which demonstrates the strength of the storytelling approaches in relation to the profiles of the learners.

It was found that speaking gains were high in EFL university classrooms in Ecuador as a result of authentic digital storytelling, though teacher readiness to apply new communicative strategies was noted as a prerequisite for success by Arroba and Acosta (2021). The pedagogical design of this present study is facilitative, as Arroba and Acosta described, in that the teacher guided, did not correct, used open-ended questions, and scaffolded the interactive components of the study. The parallel in finding and conditions of implementation enhances the confidence that what is found here is generalizable.

In a study of Primary school children in a rural school in Malaysia, Nair and Md Yunus (2022) discovered that the children's fluency, accuracy and pronunciation improved significantly after using a digital storytelling application (Toontastic 3D), and that fluency improved the most. In the present study, the same is true with regard to the fluency dimension, which yielded the highest score on the M gain (M gain = 15.90 points) in the four dimensions examined. The findings from the above studies show convergence despite the differences in educational level, delivery (dialogical interaction, face to face, not digital tools), and linguistic context (EFL4, not EFL).

Although the methods used in Kirsch (2016)'s work are different from those used in the present study, the qualitative study results were similar to those of the present study—namely, that storytelling resulted in more meaningful and sustained oral involvement of the students than structured exercises did, which are consistent with the present study's observation that the students in the experimental group expressed more extended and coherent oral response throughout the intervention period. It is interesting to note that Kirsch's focus on interactive storytelling elements, such as mime, gesture, and teacher–student interaction, are similar to the present intervention's dialogical approach to fluency development, in which the interaction between the learner and learner was the primary mechanism of fluency development.

In the context of education, in an Arab language, and using French as a foreign language, Benabbes and Abu Taleb (2024) concluded that storytelling made students not afraid to speak and increased the coherence of stories. The present study expands upon this study in the context of English as a 4th language in a specifically Druze multilingual context and offers a quantitative examination of the statistical and practical size of the effects obtained, which the Benabbes and Abu Taleb study does not present.

Overall, the results obtained in the present study are in agreement with the predictions of the existing literature. They are also unique in several ways beyond the findings of previous studies: (1) they are from a fourth-language rather than second- or third-language learning context; (2) they come from a minority language community not covered by past studies; and (3) they use non-digital, classroom-based dialogical storytelling as opposed to the digital-based storytelling tools that have been used in many of the similar studies.

5.2 Strengths

- The pre-test results verified that the two groups had similar group means (Ctrl M=252.05; Exp M=250.90), justifying the interpretation of post-test results as a cause and effect.
- The assessment included four oral competence areas (fluency, interaction, coherence, communicative effectiveness), giving a holistic, ecologically valid view of speaking competence.
- The total score comparison is statistically significant with Cohen's $d = 3.832$ which is also considered educationally significant.
- All participants were from a common L4 profile (Arabic–Hebrew–Aramaic–English), from a single school, and had a similar trajectory of instruction, thus minimising confounding variables.
- The intervention was implemented in actual classrooms with normal school routines, leading to findings that can be directly applied to practitioners in similar multilingual situations.
- The study addresses the lack of literature reported in the field of EFL speaking studies by placing them within a context of a Druze multilingual community in the Golan Heights, which was not covered by the existing literature in applied linguistics.
- The intervention was firmly rooted in four valid theoretical frameworks (Vygotsky, CLT, Long's Interaction Hypothesis, Swain's Output Hypothesis), guaranteeing pedagogical alignment that was principled.

- Dialogical storytelling did not only lead to fluency improvements, gains were found on all four dimensions of the rubric, suggesting that it resulted in a general rather than a specific oral improvement.

5.3 Limitations

- There were 2 groups with 40 participants in each group. A larger sample would enhance statistical power and the generalizability of findings, but it was not needed for the statistics performed.
- One school was selected in the area of Buqata, and data were gathered from this school. Unless replicated, findings are not likely to be generalizable to other Druze communities or similar multilingual settings in the English language classroom.
- Acoustic or temporal measures of oral fluency (such as syllable per second, mean length of run) were not used. It is recommended that future studies build on rubric assessment and include objective speech analysis tools.
- The intervention took place over a defined, rather limited, instructional period. The long-term stability of gains or whether they disappear when they are not practiced can not be inferred from the available evidence.
- Only quantitative data were used in the study. Students' interviews or classroom observation would have enabled a deeper understanding of the impact of dialogical storytelling at the micro level, namely on the level of the student, of what it did and why.

5.4 Recommendations

- Create dialogue-based narrative teaching methods and incorporate them into weekly English lessons, especially in classes where students lack a lot of real-life exposure to English. Pair storytelling sessions (20 minutes a week) can have a significant impact on increasing speaking time.
- Develop a context-sensitive speaking syllabus for multilingual communities that explicitly acknowledges the fourth-language status of English and plan contextually for learner repertoires instead of L1+L2 contexts.
- Develop instructional practices for English teachers in Druze and other minority-language schools that focus on interaction and storytelling in the teaching of oral language.

- Repeat this study in larger samples and with different schools to make the results more generalizable. Longitudinal designs will assist in finding out if gains in fluency will be sustained over time.
- Investigate the effects of dialogical storytelling specifically on each sub-component of fluency (speed, breakdown, repair) using acoustic measurement tools such as Praat, which would provide more fine-grained evidence than rubric-based assessment.
- Considering that the literature shows a relationship between anxiety reduction and gains in oral output, examine the role played by student anxiety in the dialogical storytelling interventions.
- Understand the pedagogical uniqueness of multilingual contexts like Buqata for the development of national English language curricula and standardised tests and allocate community-specific instructional research funding.

5.5 Conclusion

This research was aimed at examining how dialogical storytelling appeared to affect the speaking fluency of English as a fourth language of Grade 11 high school students in Buqata, Golan Heights. The study utilized the four-dimensional speaking rubric to evaluate the students' fluency, interaction, coherence, and communicative effectiveness for two test periods in a quasi-experimental design with 40 students equally distributed into experimental and control groups.

The results were clear and consistent outcomes of the intervention. Experimental group had a mean total score gain of 60.20 points (3.7 times higher than the mean total score gain of the control group, which was 16.45 points) with the difference being statistically significant at $p < .001$ and Cohen's $d = 3.832$. Improvements were seen in all four rubric dimensions, with the greatest effects seen in fluency ($d = 2.700$) and coherence ($d = 2.095$). Both null hypotheses of the current study were rejected, which means that the results from the dialogues were statistically and practically significant for the improvement of speaking fluency compared with the conventional teaching approach.

The results of this research are understood within the theoretical perspective that guided the design and development of the research. According to Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, collaborative and interactive tasks that are placed in the ZPD will result in development that cannot be achieved through independent practice. The dialogical storytelling sessions, in which students were given the chance to build stories together and to talk to one another in the moment, did just this kind of tutoring and social learning. Long's (1996) Interaction Hypothesis

suggested that two-way communicative tasks, in which both parties have to negotiate meaning, would be more effective in eliciting language learning than language learning by the teacher. This is confirmed by the large gains in interaction that were observed in the experimental group. According to the Output Hypothesis (Swain, 1995), the learner should notice the lack of knowledge in the target language and make an effort to acquire it when he/she is forced to create it in real communicative situations, which is manifested in the coherence and communicative effectiveness improvement. The between-group differences on the post-test supported and Richards's (2006) CLT framework, which predicted that the communicative, authentic activities would yield more oral output than the structural activities, as reflected in the magnitude of the between-group differences.

In addition to their statistical significance, the results have clear practical implications for teachers in multilingual settings in which English is used as a foreign language, one that is not used at home and not spoken on a regular basis. In these environments, the classroom is the main (if not only) place where students can learn to speak English. Toddlers who have been taught in such a way end up knowing more English than they can talk. This study shows that dialogical storytelling can be a low-resource alternative that has a structured approach, where meaningful interaction is at the centre of the learning process, and that can lead to measurable gains in fluency that are not being achieved by conventional methods.

There is also a contextual contribution to the study. Empirical evidence indicates that pedagogical approaches to respect and respond to the complexity of the language situation of Buqata's Druze community can meaningfully advance their students' speaking development. Although limited by the scope and constraints of a single-school, short-term design, that evidence serves as a basis for building on in future research and curriculum policy in this and similar communities.

Overall, the results of this study support the use of dialogical storytelling as an effective, theoretically sound, and practically viable method for enhancing students' speaking fluency when English is used as a fourth language. It does not involve any technology, no special materials, and does not demand any change from the communicative language teaching principles which English teachers in the region already know. It calls for a shift in classroom time, from teacher to student.

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