

Innovative methods of teaching the short story genre in the context of digitalization of education: A cross-sectional study of students in Kazakhstan

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ABSTRACT

The article is aimed at the development and implementation of innovative methods of teaching a short story as a literary genre with the use of digital instruments. The research suggests using a cross-sectional study based on descriptive methodology and comparative analysis. The study was set up at the Kazakh National Women's Teacher Training University and included 68 participants (38 in the experimental group and 30 – in the control group). The results found that digital tools are widely used to teach a short story as a literary genre. The effective methods to teach a short story as a literary genre are the following: debate and interactive discussion through online platforms, writing exercises, role-playing and simulation, problem-based tasks, thematic mind mapping, comparative study, collaborative projects, video lectures, and peer learning. Besides, it was proved that a short story is an efficient educational tool and contributes to the improvement of the professional skills of future philologists. They refer to analytical skills, critical thinking, creativity, digital literacy, emotional intelligence, cross-cultural competence, communicative skills, creative writing, and textual analysis. The experiment resulted in the development of recommendations for teaching the short story as a literary genre at the institutional, pedagogical, technological, linguistic, and psychological tiers. In conclusion, innovative methods based on digital tools enhance the process of teaching a short story as a literary genre and contribute to the training of philological students.

Keywords: Digital Tool, Online Learning Platforms, Storytelling, Critical Thinking, Assessment.

1. Introduction

With its brevity and focus, the short story captivates readers by delivering a powerful narrative in a compact form. This literary genre emphasizes a single theme, event, or character, using precise language and a well-structured plot to create an immediate impact [1]. Unlike novels, which allow for extensive character development, short stories rely on conciseness, often leaving room for interpretation. They can belong to various styles, including realism, fantasy, horror, or psychological fiction, and frequently explore profound human experiences. Through their laconic yet meaningful storytelling, short stories present different perspectives, emotions, and moments that resonate deeply with readers [2]. Short stories as a literary genre make a significant component in the curriculum of training future philologists since they enhance linguistic proficiency, cultural awareness, and critical thinking skills [3, 4]. Short stories expose students to diverse vocabulary, syntax, and stylistic techniques, aiding in language acquisition and comprehension [5]. Besides, short stories reflect cultural and historical contexts and allow learners to explore different worldviews and literary traditions [6]. Their brevity enables focused textual analysis, fostering interpretative skills and encouraging students to engage with various narrative structures [7]. It is worth adding that short stories serve as effective tools for the improvement of creative writing, as they provide models of storytelling techniques [8, 9]. Additionally, an artist's mood in short stories influences tone, atmosphere, and emotional depth, helping students develop a professional storytelling style [10]. Traditionally, teaching short stories was focused on the analysis and discussion of plot, characters, and themes [11, 12]. However, in today's educational environment, there is a necessity to shift towards innovative methods that embrace technology, interactivity, and multidisciplinary connections [13, 14, 15]. A number of scholars state that the incorporation of interactive e-books, multimedia presentations, and collaborative platforms enhances their learning outcomes and improves philological competence

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[16, 17]. Project-based learning and creative writing exercises further stimulate students' ability to apply literary concepts in practical contexts [18]. Also, using virtual discussions, Google Docs collaboration, and online literary communities can promote writing skills and cross-cultural competence [19]. The scientific sources prove that the use of such innovations helps educators engage students more effectively and makes teaching a short story enjoyable and intellectually stimulating in the digital age [13, 17].

Also, innovative methods contribute to obtaining feedback and objective assessment [20]. Currently, many works are devoted to the problem of innovative methods of teaching short stories as a literary genre. Many of them focus on literary analysis [14, 21]. One key area of investigation is the integration of multimedia resources [22]. The empirical research showed that these resources bring the narrative to life and help students connect more deeply with the plot [19, 23]. Importantly, the use of online platforms enables students to engage in topical discussions and explore the issues related to characters' lives [24]. Such methods encourage active participation and motivation [25], critical thinking [26], and innovative thinking [27]. They create a more dynamic and practice-oriented educational environment than traditional text-based approaches. Some researches concern the use of gamification, which is an innovative method that enables students to participate in storytelling challenges, quizzes, or scenario-based learning activities related to the text [25, 28]. J. Pitura, R. Kaplan-Rakowski, and Y. Asotska-Wierzba [29] indicate that artificial intelligence (AI) and virtual reality (VR) are also widely used in philological education. During the COVID-19 epidemic, philological subjects were taught through blended learning that combines the flexibility of online resources with the interactive elements of in-person classroom activities [30]. In this mode, students watch video analyses and engage in online discussions. More significantly, when using digital tools, students have the possibility to study at their own pace [31]. The use of innovative methods for teaching a short story as a literary genre is of great importance for academic discussions, particularly in training future philologists [32, 33]. Obviously, the traditional methods of teaching literature must be re-examined, and changes must be considered in the educational environment at the institutions of higher education [34, 35]. Investigating innovative methods not only enhances the understanding of short stories as a genre but also explores how these changes can enrich students' critical thinking, creativity, empathy, communication, and cultural awareness. The integration of digital instruments, such as interactive e-books, online collaborative platforms, multimedia resources, and video lectures, offers new techniques of engaging with texts, providing different approaches to understanding literary content and writing narratives in a structured way. In addition, the research into digital pedagogical strategies for teaching short stories contributes to a broader discussion about the future of education and its relationship to technology. This research not only contributes to the field of philology but also helps shape the future of educational practices and enhance the learning environment through innovative methodologies and technology integration.

Considering this, the aim of the research is to develop and implement innovative methods of teaching a short story as a literary genre with the use of digital instruments.

The research objectives relate to the following:

- (1) to analyze different digital tools applied to teach a short story as a literary genre and to assess their efficiency;
- (2) to distinguish the most effective teaching methods and to outline their use process of training future philologists;
- (3) to evaluate what skills are cultivated when a short story is studied;
- (4) to develop recommendations on teaching a short story as a literary genre at the institutions of higher education.

2. Research method

2.1. Research design

The research suggests using a cross-sectional study based on descriptive methodology and comparative analysis [36]. The study stems from linguistics, literary studies, educational psychology, pedagogy, and sociocultural theories, which help explain the interaction between teaching methods, digital tools, and curriculum content. A cross-sectional study was conducted according to constructivist learning theory, which emphasizes the acquiring new knowledge by students [37], and cognitive load theory examines the student's ability to process educational materials effectively [38; 39]. The methodological framework of the cross-sectional study used quantitative and qualitative research approaches. This study relied on survey research, standardized assessment, and

observational methods to compare learning outcomes across the student population. This framework was instrumental in evaluating the impact of innovative methods and digital tools without requiring long-term monitoring of participants. The organization of cross-sectional study considered the following foundational principles: (1) comparative analysis contrast different groups of students; (2) descriptive research to provide an accurate analysis of current conditions of teaching a short story as a literary genre; (3) using multiple methods, both qualitative and quantitative, to ensure the reliability of findings; (4) ethical considerations; (5) contextual analysis to recognize the importance of the educational environment where various digital tools are implemented.

2.2. Participants

The study was set up at the Kazakh National Women's Teacher Training University (Almaty, Kazakhstan) and based on an anonymous survey for second-year students of the specialty "Russian language and literature in schools with non-Russian language of instruction". The total number of participants was 68, where 38 students composed the experimental group (EG) and 30 in – the control group (CG). The participants were selected according to the following criteria: year of studying; specialty; prior experience with digital tools for learning; familiarity with literary genres, particularly short stories; access to the necessary technological resources (e.g., computers, internet access) required for the implementation of innovative methods within the educational process. Importantly, all students were asked to provide informed consent to participate in the study.

2.3. Instruments and procedures

The EG underwent a pedagogical intervention that integrated digital tools in teaching short stories. This approach was designed to foster a deeper understanding of literary elements and encourage creative expression through technology. In the CG, digital tools were not used, and students' learning was based on traditional methods, like close reading analysis, discussions and debates, vocabulary and grammar exercises, literary criticism, and written analysis and essays.

During the experiment, the EG and CG were provided with the same educational materials to ensure uniformity in the study. These materials included a selection of well-known short stories by English and Russian writers, particularly "The Lottery" by Shirley Jackson, "The Tell-Tale Heart" by Edgar Allan Poe, "A Good Man is Hard to Find" by Flannery O'Connor, "The Story of an Hour" by Kate Chopin, "The Death of Ivan Ilyich" by Leo Tolstoy, "The Queen of Spades" by Alexander Pushkin, and "The Bet" by Anton Chekhov. These texts were chosen for their literary significance and diverse themes, allowing us to explore short story analysis comprehensively. Both groups engaged with these stories in a structured manner.

During the pedagogical experiment, data collection was conducted using qualitative and quantitative methods to ensure a comprehensive evaluation of the effectiveness of innovative methods. The researchers employed pre- and post-assessment tests to measure students' professional skills quantitatively. The pre-assessment aimed to establish a preliminary understanding of students' abilities to analyze short stories, focusing on their knowledge of literary elements, themes, and character development. The post-assessment was used to measure any changes in these areas following the implementation of innovative methods. Both assessments were structured to include multiple-choice questions, short-answer questions, and essay prompts. Additionally, qualitative data were gathered through classroom observations and interviews with both students and instructors, providing information about the participants' engagement levels, perceptions, and experiences.

2.4. Data analysis

Data analysis was conducted using statistical methods to compare the skills analysis in both groups. The researchers also used descriptive statistics to summarize the data. This provided an accurate assessment of the use of innovative methods and digital tools. Qualitative data were analyzed through thematic analysis of responses from interviews and classroom observations. Using both quantitative and qualitative data offered a detailed presentation of the impact of innovative methods in the process of teaching a short story as a literary genre.

3. Results and discussion

3.1. Digital tools used to teach a short story as a literary genre

During the experiment, various digital tools were integrated to facilitate the study of a short story. The efficiency of the implemented digital tools was evaluated. Students' perceptions were analyzed since the feedback on their

learning experience was gathered. Participants assessed the tools using five key criteria: engagement and interaction, clarity, relevance to their future professional activity, autonomy, and immediate feedback. Engagement and interaction measured the possibility of a tool to maintain students' interest and encourage collaboration, while clarity relates to the understanding of literary material. Relevance examined the skills cultivated in their professional development, and autonomy assessed the ability of a tool to support self-directed learning. Feedback considered the quality and timeliness of responses provided by a tool to support teaching a short story as a literary genre. Table 1 shows the analysis of students' perceptions of the problem.

Table 1. Use of digital tools to teach a short story as a literary genre

Digital tools	Pedagogical intention	Students' perceptions				
		Engagement and interaction	Clarity	Relevance to professional activity	Autonomy	Feedback
Google Classroom	To organize the lesson plans, assignments, and feedback	21	12	14	12	16
Kahoot!	To engage students in interactive activities related to the short story	5	7	10	15	10
Padlet	To allows students to collaboratively post and discuss ideas, fostering group learning and critical thinking	13	12	11	18	7
Edmodo	To facilitate communication between teachers and students	15	14	11	7	8
Flipgrid	To provide a platform for students to record video responses or reflections on a short story	12	14	20	17	9
Storybird	To encourage students to create their own stories inspired by the short story studied	20	14	15	8	5
Quizzizz	To offer gamified assessments where students can answer multiple-choice questions about a short story	12	14	17	11	9
Edpuzzle	To enhance students' engagement and comprehension through video content	17	18	17	15	12

Digital tools	Pedagogical intention	Students' perceptions				
		Engagement and interaction	Clarity	Relevance to professional activity	Autonomy	Feedback
Nearpod	To enable interactive lessons that help students analyze the themes, characters, and structure of a short story	11	10	18	11	6
Google Docs	To allow students to write and edit essays or analyses of short stories	17	20	13	14	11
Canva	To allow students to create visual summaries, infographics, or posters related to the short story	12	15	17	19	21
Stormboard	To provide a virtual space for students to brainstorm, post notes, quotes, or comments on short stories	13	19	14	21	17
Trello	To organize tasks related to teaching a short story	20	19	18	24	11
Socrative	To test students' understanding of short stories	12	17	19	21	18
Mentimeter	To enhance engagement and real-time participation through live polls, quizzes, and Q&A sessions	17	19	15	16	21

The findings showed that Google Classroom was primarily characterized by engagement and interaction and the possibility to receive feedback, Padlet – by autonomy, Edmodo, Storybird, and Trello – by engagement and interaction, Flipgrid and Nearpod – by relevance to professional activity and autonomy, Quizzizz – by clarity and relevance to professional activity. At the same time, Google Docs and Edpuzzle were described based on engagement and interaction, clarity and relevance to professional activity, Mentimeter and Socrative – feedback, and Canva – autonomy and feedback. These outcomes were used to design a lesson plan and maximize short stories' educational potential. Further, these digital tools were integrated into various teaching methods and strategies to enhance students' learning outcomes—implementing innovative methods to create a more efficient educational process.

3.2. Implementation of innovative methods to teach a short story as a literary genre

The implementation of innovative methods to teach the short story as a literary genre was conducted based on their careful selection according to several key requirements. The researchers paid attention to students' engagement, adaptability to different learning styles, alignment with educational objectives, accommodations for integrating digital tools, and relevance to professional competencies. Considering these factors, it was

possible to integrate methods such as interactive discussions, problem-based learning, multimedia adaptation, comparative study, role-play, simulation, and collaborative projects to enhance comprehension of educational material and critical thinking. Table 2 shows the description of innovative methods and digital tools that were used to teach a short story as a literary genre. Teaching methods and digital tools were distinguished according to the educational material (a short story).

Table 2. Implementation of innovative methods to teach a short story as a literary genre

Short story	Innovative methods	Digital tools
“The Lottery” by Shirley Jackson	Debate and interactive discussion through online platforms; Alternate ending writing; Role-playing and simulation.	Padlet (for collaborative idea sharing); Flipgrid (for video responses and discussions).
“The Tell-Tale Heart” by Edgar Allan Poe	Problem-based tasks; Psychological analysis; Multimedia adaptation.	Canva (for digital storytelling); Nearpod (development of interactive lessons); Mentimeter (for enhancement real-time participation). Padlet (for theme mapping and making notes);
“A Good Man is Hard to Find” by Flannery O’Connor	Character motivation analysis; Social media profiles analysis; Thematic mind maps.	Twitter or another social network (for character-based engagement); Edpuzzle (for presentation of video mini-lecture).
“The Story of an Hour” by Kate Chopin	Comparative study; Newspaper article task; Collaborative project.	Google Docs (for collaborative writing and analysis); Trello (for structuring story analysis and for collaborative discussion). Google Classroom (for feedback);
“The Death of Ivan Ilyich” by Leo Tolstoy	Virtual guest speaker; Personal reflection journal; Collaborative project; Online discussion.	Edmodo (for communication between teachers and students); Google Forms (for reflective journaling); Edpuzzle (to present video content).
“The Queen of Spades” by Alexander Pushkin	Interactive gamification; Creative adaptation; Peer learning.	Quizlet (for gamified learning); Storybird (for creation own stories); Padlet (to discuss ideas). Edmodo (for debate forums);
“The Bet” by Anton Chekhov	Simulation-based exercise; Video lecture; Online debate	Google Classroom (for broadcasting video); Kahoot! (for students’ engagement); Socrative (for assessment and feedback).

Innovative methods can maximize the educational process and increase students’ learning outcomes and professional skills comprising their pedagogical and linguistical competencies.

3.3. Cultivation of professional skills through a short story

The cultivation of professional skills through the teaching of short stories was analyzed. During the experiment, various teaching methods, including interactive discussions, debates, and digital tools, were employed to simulate real-world professional scenarios where interpretation, reasoning, communication, and teaching activity are essential. When literary texts were integrated into the educational process in this structured manner, students were able to deepen their storytelling techniques and strengthen a set of skills relevant to their future

careers, such as analytical skills, critical thinking, creativity, and emotional intelligence. Figure 1 shows the number of students whose professional skills were assessed positively (good or excellent marks).

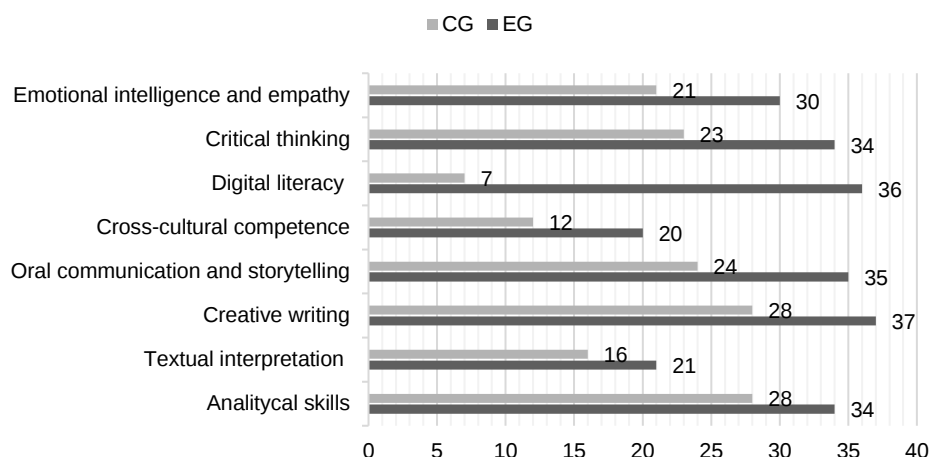


Figure 1. Cultivation of professional skills through short stories

The results demonstrated that EG students showed a significant increase in digital literacy (+19), critical thinking, oral communication and storytelling (+11), emotional intelligence and empathy, and creative writing (+9). At the same time, the pedagogical experiment demonstrated that students from the EG had higher levels of cross-cultural communication (+8), analytical skills (+6), and textual interpretation (+5). Thus, it is worth stating that implementing innovative methods based on digital tools while teaching short stories as a literary genre has a significant positive impact on the education process, particularly in fostering students' professional growth. When different methods and tools are combined, it contributes to the formation of an interactive and student-centered educational environment, and learning becomes more dynamic and adaptable to students' needs. It was found that digital tools enhance comprehension, encourage more profound analysis, and promote active participation, making literary study more relevant for improving professional readiness. The findings prove that the innovative methods described strengthen students' ability to interpret and evaluate texts and equip them with critical thinking, digital literacy, emotional intelligence, and communicative skills. Moreover, the interactive nature of digital learning fosters independence, collaboration, and motivation for future professional activity, ensuring that students effectively develop valuable professional skills.

3.4. Recommendation on teaching a short story as a literary genre at the institutions of higher education

The design of recommendations on teaching the short story as a literary genre at the institutions of higher education is an important measure to ensure an effective and structured approach to literary education for future philologists, including language and literature teachers, translators, and journalists. A well-developed framework provides clarity in selecting appropriate teaching methods, integrating digital tools, and fostering analytical and interpretive skills that are significant for future specialists in the sphere of language and literature. The establishment of clear guidelines may contribute to the enhancement of students' engagement with literary texts, improve their ability to assess narratives critically and strengthen their ability to apply literary analysis in their professional activities. Such recommendations may definitely bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application. Also, they may ensure that students gain a deeper appreciation of literature while acquiring competencies necessary for their careers in education, translation, or media. The findings show that the recommendations for teaching the short story as a literary genre at the institutions of higher education are structured across five tiers: organizational, pedagogical, technological, linguistic, and psychological. This multi-tiered approach proved a comprehensive and well-balanced methodology that addresses various aspects of the educational process. The organizational tier focuses on structuring the curriculum and integrating short story studies effectively within academic programs. The pedagogical tier ensures the selection of appropriate teaching methods that foster critical thinking and engagement. The technological tier emphasizes the integration of digital tools, and the linguistic tier refers to language proficiency. And the psychological tier considers students' motivation, cognitive load, and emotional engagement. Figure 2 presents the theoretical framework for the recommendation of teaching a short story as a literary genre at institutions of higher education.

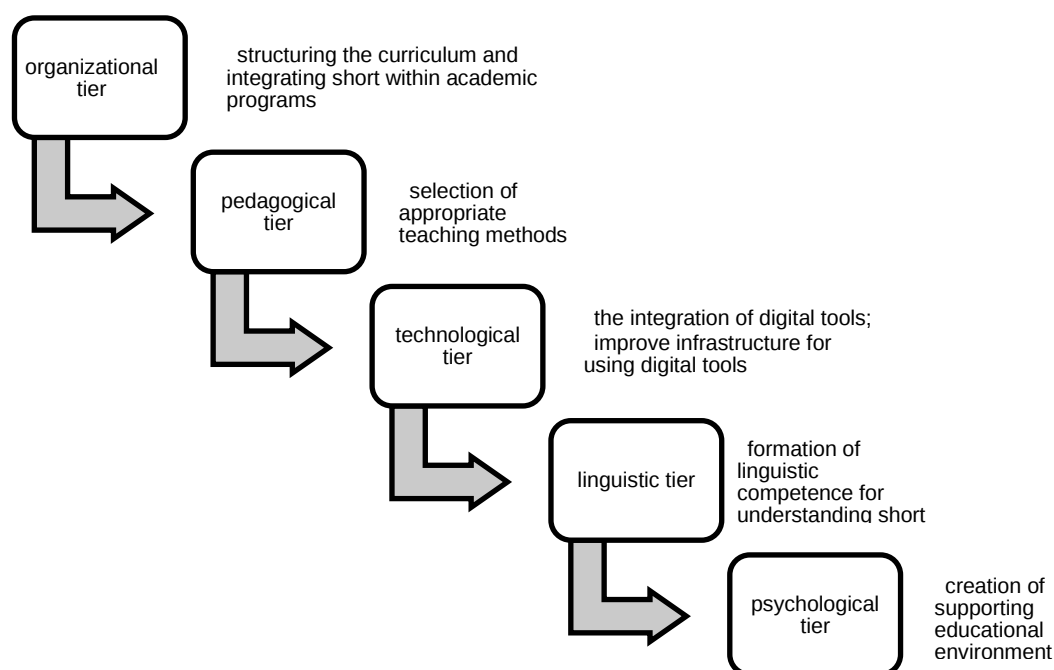


Figure 2. Theoretical framework for the recommendation on teaching a short story as a literary genre

At the same time, these tiers are concerned with specific measures oriented towards the improvement of teaching a short story as a literary genre. To enhance the efficiency of the educational process, it is important to explain them in detail. Regarding the *organizational tier*, it is required to (1) improve the appropriate curriculum and ensure that short stories are included as a central component in the literary courses across undergraduate and graduate programs for philology, language, and literature studies; (2) define clear and measurable learning objectives for short story studies; (3) develop a flexible course structure that allows students to engage with a variety of short stories, including works from different cultures, historical periods, and genres to promote diversity in literary exposure; (4) design the course workload to balance reading, discussion, analysis, and assignments; (5) provide interdisciplinary links using short stories; (6) provide options for both in-person and online learning. When a *pedagogical tier* is discussed, it is important to consider the following recommendations: (1) to use active learning techniques to encourage students; (2) to teach short stories within their contexts; (3) to apply close reading techniques and textual analysis; (4) to organize creative assignments; (5) to encourage independent interpretation; (7) to use student-centered approach; (8) to incorporate multimedia resources, such as films or video lectures, to engage students; (9) use peer learning and group activities to organize productive discussions; (10) to develop professional skills through short stories. At the *technological tier* the following measures are required: (1) to use interactive digital platforms; (2) to integrate multimedia content; (3) to explore the use of VR or AI to create an efficient educational environment where students can experience short stories in a more interactive and visual way; (4) to utilize e-learning platforms to organize course materials, assignments, and interactive activities; (5) to use online collaboration tools like Google Docs, Padlet, or Trello for collaborative projects; (6) to incorporate gamification elements; (7) to encourage students to create multimedia projects; (8) to implement online peer review processes; (9) to encourage using mobile apps that support literature study, such as audiobook platforms, e-readers, or literature analysis apps. The linguistic tier is critical when teaching a short story as a literary genre. Training of future philologists concerns the following measures: (1) to focus on language and style; (2) to teach students to analyze the vocabulary and syntax used in short stories; (3) to indicate the relationship between language and culture; (4) to incorporate translation and creative writing tasks. At the *psychological tier*, it is required to (1) foster intrinsic motivation to learning; (2) encourage students to analyze characters' emotional states and motivations, helping them develop empathy; (3) use reflective exercises; (4) create a supportive and open classroom environment that encourages students to share their interpretations and emotional reactions to the stories; (5) use short stories that explore psychological conflicts to help students understand human behavior, motivations, and resolution strategies, improving their ability to navigate personal and professional challenges; (6) outline the role of social psychology in short stories by discussing characters' behaviors. Therefore, implementing innovative methods in teaching a short story as a literary genre significantly enhances the educational process. These methods enable students to interact dynamically with texts through multimedia analysis, collaborative online discussions, and

interactive assessment. Digital tools provide immediate access to resources, including audio and video adaptations of stories, which help students engage with the content from multiple perspectives. Innovative methods like gamification, digital storytelling, and virtual discussions promote active learning and critical thinking, encouraging students to analyze literary elements and create their own stories.

4. Discussion

The literature review results demonstrated that digital tools are currently widely used in the educational process, including teaching short stories since they can enhance students' engagement, foster interactive learning, and provide different perspectives on texts [3, 40]. Several studies are devoted to digital storytelling platforms [41, 42]. They indicate that these platforms enable students to explore narrative structures and construct short stories. Some authors described multimedia annotation tools, where students can discuss literary elements in real time [43]. Recent research findings suggest that these tools promote deeper reading comprehension and critical thinking by encouraging active participation and peer discussion [44]. Moreover, many authors study the potential of AI-driven platforms in teaching short stories [29]. They stress that AI tools support differentiated instruction and personalized learning. The efficiency of digital tools in teaching short stories has been widely studied, with findings emphasizing their effectiveness in addressing various pedagogical challenges [34, 35]. Specific works describe the ability of digital tools to teach short stories within the inclusive scheme [45].

Taking this into consideration, the results of the cross-sectional study proved the importance of using digital tools for solving different pedagogical tasks like organization of the lesson plans, students' engagement, facilitation of communication, providing game-based assignments, or testing students' understanding of short stories. During the experiment, fifteen digital tools were used, and they were assessed according to five key criteria: engagement and interaction, clarity, relevance to their future professional activity, autonomy, and immediate feedback. The results showed that these tools have a positive impact on the educational process, but their pedagogical functionality is different. For example, Google Classroom was characterized by engagement interaction and the possibility to receive feedback. Other tools such as Edmodo, Storybird, and Trello were preferred since they contribute to students' engagement and interaction. Flipgrid and Nearpod contribute to the formation of integrated professional competence and simulate real-life activities. At the same time, Google Docs and Edpuzzle were described on the basis of engagement and interaction, clarity, and relevance to professional activity. Scientific literature identifies several effective teaching methods for teaching short stories as a literary genre [15, 33]. It was found that close reading and textual analysis remain fundamental [46]. Reader-response theory further enhances comprehension by encouraging students to interpret texts based on their experiences and emotions [7]. Special attention was paid to digital storytelling and multimodal analysis [42]. The findings prove that implementing these methods follows a structured process where students engage with theoretical concepts, analyze short stories through guided or independent exercises, and synthesize their understanding through creative projects or critical essays. Also, research suggests that a blended learning approach is widely introduced within the educational process, contributing to enhancing technology-enhanced learning [47]. The experiment found that the methods used to teach a short story as a literary genre must be selected based on their contribution to students' engagement, adaptability to different learning styles, alignment with educational objectives, accommodations for integrating digital tools, and relevance to professional competencies. Accordingly, the following methods were applied: debate and interactive discussion through online platforms, writing exercises, role-playing and simulation, problem-based tasks, thematic mind mapping, comparative study, collaborative projects, video lectures, peer learning, etc. The cross-section study conducted among 68 students at the Kazakh National Women's Teacher Training University stressed that integrating digital tools enhances the potential of teaching methods to instruct short stories as a literary genre. Notably, several scientific sources are devoted to forming professional skills through a short story [24, 48]. Some scholars indicate that short stories contribute to fostering critical thinking [26], analytical reasoning [49], and practical communication skills [4]. Also, short stories cultivate empathy and cultural awareness, which are vital in professions involving intercultural communication, education, and human interaction [50, 51].

The process of discussing, writing about, and presenting analyses of short stories strengthens argumentation, public speaking, and academic writing skills [19]. The results of the experiment demonstrated that the EG students were able to deepen their understanding of storytelling techniques and strengthen a set of skills necessary for their future professional activity, particularly analytical skills, critical thinking, creativity, and emotional intelligence. Statistical analysis and classroom observations proved that these tools bridge the gap between traditional analytical approaches and modern pedagogical innovations. Also, it was noticed that the

integration of digital resources supports a more experiential understanding of short stories, transforming passive reading into an active process. The most significant increase was calculated regarding digital literacy, critical thinking, oral communication and storytelling, emotional intelligence and empathy, and creative writing.

Besides, it was found that the effective integration of digital tools and innovative methods in teaching short stories as a literary genre requires well-designed recommendations to ensure coherence, pedagogical relevance, and student engagement [18, 22, 52]. Obviously, the use of technology may become fragmented without a structured framework. As a result, the recommendations on teaching the short story as a literary genre at the institutions of higher education were designed. They are structured across organizational, pedagogical, technological, linguistic, and psychological tiers. The experiment outcomes prove that this multi-tiered approach addresses various aspects of the educational process while teaching the short story as a literary genre to students of philological specialties.

5. Conclusions

To conclude, digital tools are widely used in the educational process for solving different pedagogical tasks like organizing lesson plans, students' engagement, facilitating communication, providing game-based assignments, or testing students' understanding of short stories. To teach a short story as a literary genre, fifteen digital tools were used: Google Classroom, Kahoot!, Padlet, Edmodo, Flipgrid, Storybird, Quizzizz, Edpuzzle, Nearpod, Google Docs, Canva, Stormboard, Trello, Socrative, and Mentimeter. The experiment proved that the methods used to teach a short story as a literary genre must be selected based on their contribution to students' engagement, adaptability to different learning styles, alignment with educational objectives, accommodations for integrating digital tools, and relevance to professional competencies. In the EG, specific teaching methods were applied. Some included debate and interactive discussion through online platforms, writing exercises, role-playing and simulation, problem-based tasks, thematic mind mapping, comparative study, collaborative projects, video lectures, and peer learning. The cross-sections stressed that integrating digital tools enhances the potential of teaching methods used to teach short stories as a literary genre at the institution of higher education. Professional skills were improved by studying the role of short stories in the educational process. They refer to analytical skills, critical thinking, creativity, digital literacy, emotional intelligence, cross-cultural competence, communicative skills, creative writing, and textual analysis. The experiment developed recommendations for teaching the short story as a literary genre at higher education institutions. They are structured across organizational, pedagogical, technological, linguistic, and psychological tiers. This multi-tiered approach was found to provide appropriate teaching methods and digital tools oriented toward pedagogical challenges related to teaching a short story as a literary genre.

Declaration of competing interest

The authors declare that they have no any known financial or non-financial competing interests in any material discussed in this paper.

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Author contribution

The contribution to the paper is as follows: Sh. Umirkhanova, G. Orynkhonova: study conception and design; Zh. Orynkhonova: data collection; Sh. Umirkhanova, G. Orynkhonova, Z. Aitzhanova: analysis and interpretation of results; Zh. Orynkhonova: draft preparation. All authors approved the final version of the manuscript.

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