

## **A STUDY ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF STORYTELLING METHOD IN IMPROVING STUDENTS SPEAKING SKILL**

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### **Abstract**

This study makes a unique contribution to the field of language education by describing how the implementation of storytelling techniques enhances students' speaking skills. It also explains how students' speaking skills improve after the implementation of storytelling. The study uses a qualitative design that applies the Library Research Method. Data were collected from scientific papers on the implementation of storytelling in improving students' speaking skills between 2018 and 2023. Scientific papers were found in libraries and on the internet. Primary data were obtained from an e-book by Ellis, G., & Brewster, J. (2002), entitled "Tell it again!" Meanwhile, secondary data were obtained from six journal articles by Kaet (2023), Pratiwi (2023), Gonçalves (2019), Hardianti (2019), Tambunan (2018), and Megawati (2018), as well as a thesis by Sabila (2022). Through a comprehensive analysis of the seven studies presented above, it is evident that the use of storytelling techniques in teaching English significantly contributes to improving students' speaking skills. Despite using different approaches and activities, all of them show that the use of storytelling has a positive impact on students' ability to speak English.

**Keywords:** Speaking, Storytelling, Implementation

### **BACKGROUND**

Speaking is the most important skill for people who spend more time interacting orally than in written form. People speak everywhere and every day in their interactions with other people. Despite the importance, teaching speaking skills can be very challenging due to some factors such as inhibition, lack of topical knowledge, low participation, mother tongue use, and lack of vocabulary (Tuan & Mai, 2015; Melendez et al., 2014). Most times, the students are afraid of making mistakes in speaking and taking criticism over the mistakes. Using the storytelling method in teaching speaking skills offers numerous advantages. Storytelling can enhance students' communication skills. For example, the study by Ramadhani et al. (2023) indicated that the Storytelling method not only

improves the students' speaking skills but also builds the students' confidence in speaking, expands vocabulary acquisition, and promotes cross-cultural understanding.

This study delves into the practical implementation of storytelling in speaking classes and the reasons for its effectiveness. How can the storytelling method be effectively applied in teaching speaking skills, and what makes it such a powerful tool for improving speaking skills? While the storytelling method can be applied to all levels of education, this study specifically focuses on its application with senior high school and university students aged between 15-21, empowering educators with practical insights.

Guebba (2021) defines speaking as the physical realization of ideas, concepts, and

assumptions existing in the human schema, it transforms abstract ideas to sounds and utterances that form meaning. It involves more than just pronouncing words. It requires skills like being prepared, interacting with audiences, and structuring speeches effectively. Speaking skills have some components that need to be taken into account. First, *comprehensibility* refers to whether the listeners can understand the message delivered by the speaker. Second is *fluency*, meaning “the natural ability to speak spontaneously as quickly, smoothly, accurately, lucid, efficient and comprehensively with few numbers of errors that may distract the listener from the speaker’s message under the temporal constraints of online processing” (Permana et al., 2021, p.45). Third, *accuracy* refers to how well students can use correct grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation when they speak. Last is *appropriacy*, which encompasses the word choice, whether a word is suitable for the context and the culture in which it is being used. Storytelling is the art or technique of conveying narratives, anecdotes, or experiences through spoken or written means.

Teaching procedures of the Storytelling method are divided into three parts: pre-telling, while-telling, and post-telling (Ibrahim, 2022). The pre-telling aims to prepare the students and flourish the learning atmosphere to comfort the students' worries about listening to the story without any translation. In the while-telling, teachers act as models in telling the story using well-known narrative techniques. By doing so, students remain motivated to speak and focus on the process. Storytelling serves as a powerful tool for improving speaking skills by providing learners with authentic language input. Through storytelling, they can sequence the events, expand their point of view, and develop their social intelligence competence (Bala, 2015).

## LITERATURE REVIEW

This study aims to comprehensively examine how storytelling can effectively improve students' speaking skills and describe the mechanisms behind this improvement.

### Challenges and Significance of Speaking Skills

Speaking skills are a fundamental aspect of everyday human communication. However, mastering these skills, especially in the context of a second or foreign language, often faces various challenges. Common obstacles include lack of confidence (inhibition), limited knowledge of the topic, low participation, a tendency to use one's native language, and limited vocabulary (Tuan & Mai, 2015). Students often feel anxious about making mistakes and receiving criticism, which can hinder their ability to speak spontaneously and accurately. This fear often stems from previous negative experiences or pressure to perform perfectly, causing them to avoid speaking practice or become overly cautious, which in turn hinders the development of their fluency.

Amir (2013) defines speaking as an act of verbal communication through vocal sounds and language, which is more than just uttering words, but also involves skills such as preparation, interaction with the audience, and effective speech structuring. To measure speaking proficiency, several key components need to be considered (Permana et al., 2021, p.45):

- **Comprehensibility:** Refers to how well listeners can understand the message conveyed by the speaker. Challenges arise when students have difficulty articulating their ideas clearly, either due to confusing sentence structure or inappropriate word choice.
- **Fluency:** Refers to the natural ability to speak spontaneously, as quickly, smoothly, accurately, clearly, efficiently, and comprehensively as possible with

few errors that might distract the listener within the time constraints of online processing. Lack of fluency is often evident in long pauses, repetition of words, or difficulty finding the right words.

- **Accuracy:** Refers to how well students can use correct grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation when they speak. Difficulties in accuracy are often caused by interference from the native language or a lack of deep understanding of the grammatical and phonological rules of the target language.
- **Appropriateness:** This includes word choice, whether a word is appropriate for the context and culture in which it is used. Challenges in appropriateness can hinder effective communication and lead to cultural misunderstandings.

### **Storytelling as an Effective Pedagogical Approach**

Amidst these challenges, storytelling has been identified as a highly effective pedagogical strategy for improving speaking skills. Storytelling is defined as the art or technique of conveying narratives, anecdotes, or experiences through oral or written means (Bala, 2015). Recent research continues to support the effectiveness of this method in language skill development.

- a. Improvement in Speaking Components**  
A study by Nair and Yusuf (2022) showed that storytelling significantly improved the speaking skills of junior high school students, particularly in terms of pronunciation, fluency, confidence, and expression. Students who were initially hesitant showed improvement in clarity and natural fluency. Similar research by Rakhima & Sogdiana (2024) reinforces that storytelling successfully improves the fluency of middle school students.
- b. Self-Confidence and Motivation**  
Storytelling has been proven effective in building students' confidence to speak in public. A study by Huang (2023) found

that storytelling improved students' confidence in speaking and encouraged active participation in class, even though challenges such as initial nervousness still existed. Belda-Medina & Goddard (2024) also stated that storytelling can develop confidence, vocabulary, grammar, and comprehension.

- c. Vocabulary and Language Structure Mastery**

Storytelling provides authentic and contextual language input, which is highly beneficial for vocabulary acquisition and sentence structure understanding. Through stories, students can sequence events, broaden their perspectives, and develop their social intelligence (Badawi et al., 2022; Rini et al., 2021; Swari, 2022). Wibowo et al. (2024) emphasises that storytelling is a natural and engaging way for young learners to learn new vocabulary because it stimulates curiosity and creates memorable experiences.

- d. Engagement and Interaction**

This method encourages interaction between students, teachers, and learning materials. Liskinasih and Marcelina (2024) highlights story completion techniques as a fun and engaging method that encourages students to express themselves freely and contribute to the narrative, demonstrating a significant positive impact on students' speaking proficiency.

- e. Various Implementation Techniques**

Storytelling teaching procedures are generally divided into three stages: pre-storytelling (preparing students), storytelling (teacher as a model), and post-storytelling (follow-up activities) (Ibrahim, 2022). Various activities can be applied, such as retelling stories, storytelling circles, role-playing stories, using visual aids, storytelling performances, story sequencing activities, and character interviews (Ellis & Brewster, 2002). This narrative approach allows students to express

themselves through structured yet creative scenarios (Chen & Lee, 2023).

f. Comparison with Other Methods

Although traditional storytelling remains effective, technological advances have introduced digital storytelling as an attractive alternative. Comparative research shows that both methods are effective in improving speaking skills, with digital storytelling offering a more engaging and interactive experience for learners (Sudrajat et al., 2024).

Consistently, recent studies confirm that storytelling is a powerful and versatile tool in teaching speaking skills. This method not only addresses common barriers to learning to speak but also proactively builds confidence, enriches vocabulary, and improves students' fluency and accuracy, making it a highly recommended pedagogical approach in language education.

## METHOD OF THE RESEARCH

This study employed a comprehensive qualitative approach known as *Library Research*. Library research is a method of gathering data from various literature sources to analyze and answer research problems without doing fieldwork. It focuses on theories, principles, and ideas from existing literature (Zafira et al., 2022)), providing a comprehensive understanding of the topic. Instead of conducting field research, the researcher gathered data from books, journal articles, and academic writing such as thesis and dissertation.

According to Douglas (2015), research library data sources are divided into two, namely primary sources and secondary sources. Primary sources are original works, while secondary sources are studied by other researchers. This study gathered the primary source from an e-book by (Gail Ellis & Jane Brewster, 2002) entitled "Tell it Again!: The New Storytelling Handbook for Primary Teachers". Meanwhile, the secondary sources were obtained from previous studies

such as theses, journal articles, working papers, magazine articles, and related documents like blogs on the implementation of Storytelling methods in teaching speaking skills published or posted between 2018-2023.

To collect data for this study, the researcher applied a thorough technique, sometimes called *existing documents*. She collected data from a wide range of sources, including books, journal and magazine articles, academic papers such as skripsi, thesis, and working papers, and web pages from the library and the internet. This thorough data collection process instills confidence in the research findings.

The data were analyzed by using the content analysis method. According to Wilson (2016), content analysis is an analysis that can be used, both quantitative and qualitative, to analyze written, verbal, or visual documentation systematically. The following are the steps of content analysis.

1. Review and identify data sources to extract pertinent information.
2. Comprehend the content and crucial details within the data sources.
3. Summarize the information retrieved from the data sources.
4. Arrange the information and explanations into appropriate categories.
5. Draw conclusions based on the descriptions derived from the data sources.

## FINDING AND DISCUSSION

### Findings

#### *Findings of Primary Data*

*Tell it Again!: The New Storytelling Handbook for Primary Teachers* focuses on the power of storytelling in language learning and teaching. It presents a collection of stories from around the world, carefully selected to engage and captivate language learners. The book provides a framework for using these stories in the classroom, emphasizing the importance of

repetition and storytelling techniques in language acquisition. These activities are designed to engage students in meaningful language practice while fostering their storytelling abilities and improving their speaking skills.

- 1) Retelling Stories: Students can work in pairs or small groups to retell stories they have heard in their own words.
- 2) Storytelling Circles: In this activity, students sit in a circle and take turns adding to a story.
- 3) Acting Out Stories: Students can act out stories they have heard or read, either in small groups or as a whole class.
- 4) Story Retelling with Visual Aids: Provide students with visual aids such as pictures, flashcards, or props to help them retell stories.
- 5) Storytelling Performances: Organize storytelling performances where students have the opportunity to share their own stories or retell familiar stories to an audience.
- 6) Story Sequencing Activities: Give students sets of picture cards or sentence strips from a story and ask them to arrange them in the correct sequence.
- 7) Character Interviews: Students can take on the role of a character from a story and participate in interviews with their classmates.

### ***Findings of Secondary Data***

After collecting, organizing, analyzing, and interpreting the secondary data, the researcher found that even though the teaching procedures of the storytelling varied, the results were still the same: the Storytelling method was effective in improving students' speaking skills.

This study brings implications to research and teaching practice of English-speaking skills. Most studies in the past focused on the implementation of the Storytelling method in improving students' speaking skills without specifically mentioning what characteristics it has that can improve the students' speaking skills.

The findings of this study provide more information pertaining to the implementation and implication of the Storytelling method; thus, the teachers can learn about it and make some modifications to either tailor it to the student's needs or make it better. Future researchers, through these findings, can get the ideas to carry out studies on using the Storytelling method to teach other language skills and components.

### **Discussion**

This study aims to describe the implementation of the storytelling method in improving students' speaking skills and explain how students' speaking skills improved after the implementation of storytelling. Through a comprehensive analysis of primary and secondary data, the findings of this study consistently show that the storytelling method has a significant contribution to improving students' speaking skills.

### ***Implementation of the Storytelling Method***

Primary data from the e-book 'Tell it Again!: The New Storytelling Handbook for Primary Teachers' by Ellis and Brewster (2022) highlights the power of storytelling in language learning. This book provides a framework for using stories in the classroom, emphasizing the importance of repetition and storytelling techniques in language acquisition to improve fluency. Activities that can be applied in the storytelling process include:

- Retelling Stories: Students can work in pairs or small groups to retell stories they have heard in their own words. This activity enhances comprehension and fluency as students reconstruct the narrative using their own vocabulary and sentence structures (Henao, 2024).
- Storytelling Circles: Students sit in a circle and take turns adding to a story, fostering collaborative storytelling and enhancing their ability to build upon each other's ideas (Yulianawati et al., 2022).

- **Acting Out Stories:** Students can act out stories they have heard or read, either in small groups or as a whole class. This helps in kinesthetic learning and allows for a deeper understanding and engagement with the material (Anrasiyana, 2021).
- **Story Retelling with Visual Aids:** Providing visual aids like pictures or flashcards can significantly enhance students' ability to retell stories. These tools serve as memory aids, helping students recall the sequence of events and key details more effectively. The visual support also caters to different learning styles, making the activity more accessible and engaging for all students (Andrian & Faudi, 2020).
- **Storytelling Performances:** Teachers can hold storytelling performances where students have the opportunity to share their own stories or retell stories that are familiar to the audience. This activity helps build confidence and provides a platform for students to practice their speaking skills in a supportive environment (Sumarsih et al., 2022).
- **Story Sequencing Activities:** Provide students with a set of picture cards or sentence fragments from a story and ask them to arrange them in the correct order. This enhances their understanding of the narrative structure and improves their ability to recount events logically (Dilfuza, 2021).
- **Character Interviews:** Students can take on the roles of characters from a story and participate in interviews with their classmates. This exercise not only encourages creative thinking but also hones their ability to articulate thoughts and ideas in character. By stepping into the shoes of different characters, students learn to express diverse perspectives and emotions, thereby enhancing their speaking skills and overall communicative competence (Tompunu et al., 2021).

The storytelling teaching method is generally divided into three parts: pre-telling, while-telling, and post-telling. The pre-telling stage aims to prepare students and create a comfortable learning atmosphere that alleviates their worries about understanding the story without translation. During the while-telling stage, the teacher acts as a model, employing well-known narrative techniques to tell the story, which can motivate students to speak and stay focused on the process. This method serves as a robust tool for enhancing speaking skills by providing learners with authentic language input. Through storytelling, students can sequence events, broaden their perspectives, and cultivate their social intelligence (Badawi et al., 2022; Rini et al., 2021; Swari, 2022).

### ***Improvement of Students' Speaking Skills***

Secondary data analysis from seven studies (Kaet, 2023; Pratiwi, 2023; Gonçalves, 2019; Hardianti, 2019; Tambunan, 2018; Megawati, 2018; Sabila, 2022) consistently shows that although storytelling teaching procedures vary, the results remain the same: the storytelling method is effective in improving students' speaking skills. These findings are in line with the research by Ramadhani et al. (2023), which shows that the storytelling method not only improves students' speaking skills but also builds their confidence in speaking, expands their vocabulary acquisition, and promotes cross-cultural understanding.

The importance of storytelling in improving speaking skills can be explained through several relevant aspects of speaking skills:

- ✓ **Comprehensibility:** Storytelling provides authentic language input, helping students convey messages that are understandable to listeners.
- ✓ **Fluency:** Through storytelling practice, students can develop the ability to speak spontaneously, fluently, and accurately.

- The ability to sequence events through storytelling also contributes to fluency.
- ✓ Accuracy: Through repetition and structured practice, students have the opportunity to improve their use of grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation.
  - ✓ Appropriateness: Storytelling allows students to choose words that are appropriate for the context and culture, which is an integral part of speaking politeness.

### ***Implications and Suggestions for Further Research***

This study has clear implications for research and practice in teaching English-speaking skills. These findings provide further information on the implementation and implications of the storytelling method, which can help teachers modify and adapt this method to suit the needs of their students.

While previous research has focused on the implementation of storytelling methods in improving students' speaking skills, this study provides insights into the specific characteristics that make this method effective. For further research, these findings can provide ideas for conducting studies on the use of storytelling methods to teach other language skills and components. This includes further exploration of how storytelling can improve listening, writing, or reading skills, as well as the development of students' social-emotional competencies.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS**

### **Conclusion**

This study comprehensively examines the implementation of the storytelling method and its impact on improving students' speaking skills. Through primary data analysis from the e-book 'Tell it Again!: The New Storytelling Handbook for Primary Teachers' by Ellis and Brewster (2002), as well as secondary data from seven relevant previous studies, it can be concluded that the

storytelling method is a very effective tool in teaching English speaking skills.

The implementation of storytelling involves a series of structured procedures, ranging from the pre-story stage, the storytelling stage, to the post-story stage, all of which are designed to create a conducive and authentic learning environment.

Various activities such as retelling stories, storytelling circles, role-playing stories, using visual aids, storytelling performances, story sequencing activities, and character interviews have been proven to engage students in meaningful language practice actively. Specifically, the storytelling method contributes to the improvement of speaking skill components such as comprehensibility, fluency, accuracy, and politeness.

The ability of storytelling to provide authentic language input, develop students' confidence, expand vocabulary, and promote cross-cultural understanding are key factors in its effectiveness. Despite using varied approaches, the studies analyzed consistently show the positive impact of storytelling on students' speaking skills, overcoming common challenges in speaking teaching, such as inhibition and lack of participation.

### **Suggestions**

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, several suggestions can be made:

- For English Teachers: Teachers are strongly encouraged to integrate storytelling methods into their speaking skills teaching curriculum. Teachers can utilize the various techniques and activities outlined in this study and modify them according to the specific characteristics and needs of their students to maximize the potential of this method in improving students' speaking skills and confidence.
- For Learning Material Developers: English teaching materials, especially those focusing on speaking skills, should include more elements and guidelines

related to storytelling methods. The development of textbooks or modules equipped with story examples, activity guidelines, and storytelling assessment rubrics would greatly assist teachers and students.

- For Further Researchers: This study paves the way for further exploration of the storytelling method. Future researchers may consider the following:
  - Investigating the effectiveness of the storytelling method in developing other language skills such as listening, writing, or reading. Analyzing factors that may influence the success of storytelling implementation, such as class size, students' cultural backgrounds, or the duration of the method's application.
  - Conducting comparative studies between storytelling and other speaking teaching methods to identify comparative advantages.

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