

TRANSFORMING SPEAKING SKILLS WITH STORYTELLING: A STUDY AT MTS MUHAMMADIYAH AL-HAQ PALU

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ABSTRACT

Speaking skills are one aspect that needs to be develop in context of language learning. However, there are still many students who have difficulty in mastering this skill, because of the lack of knowledge of vocabulary and grammar, cause a lack of confidence in students when they want to speak English. This study investigates the effectiveness of the storytelling technique in enhancing the speaking skills of eighth-grade students at MTs Muhammadiyah Al-Haq Palu. Addressing the urgent need for engaging and student-centered strategies to improve oral proficiency, this research offers empirical evidence on the value of storytelling in English language learning. A quasi-experimental method was employed using pre-test and post-test procedures in both experimental and control groups. Thirty students were selected through convenience sampling, with fifteen assigned to each group. The experimental group received six sessions of storytelling-based instruction, while the control group learned through conventional methods. Findings reveal a substantial improvement in the experimental group, which achieved a post-test mean score of 69.33, compared to 44.67 in the control group. The novelty of this study lies in demonstrating storytelling as an effective instructional technique within the Indonesian Islamic junior high school context. The results contribute to pedagogical practices by supporting storytelling as a practical approach to improving students' speaking skills..

Keywords: *Speaking Skill, Improving, Effectiveness, Storytelling.*

INTRODUCTION

Speaking skill is one of the soft skills that should be mastered by students; it is ability to convey expression and thoughts orally. As stated by Hartati (2016), the purpose of learning a language is to be able to use that language as a means of communication, in which students can express their ideas and opinions directly. In Indonesia, speaking skill is taught in English subject, but due to the position of English as a foreign language in Indonesia and it is rarely used in everyday life, make students have difficulty in mastering this skill.

Speaking skill is very important to learn as it means of communicating with others, especially in this era of globalization where information is spread widely, and people exchange information using English as a global language. As stated by Parupalli Srinivas Rao (2019), in this era of globalization, the world has become smaller, due to people communicating in an international language

namely English in various fields such as scientific research, education, business, internet, travel and tourism, media and newspapers, software, medicine, engineering, information and technology, entertainment, banking etc. Thus students who have good speaking skills will get better opportunities to communicate and be able to adapt well in this era.

As stated in the Junior High School syllabus based on Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan Republik Indonesia (2018), English teaching focuses on improving the ability of students to use English to accomplish communication goals in a variety of situations, including both oral and written communication. Since oral communication is one of the targets of the syllabus in improving students' speaking skills the researcher needs to find a fun technique for students that can help students to improve their speaking skills.

In contrast, based on preliminary observation of students of MTs Muhammadiyah Al-Haq Palu, the researcher found that the students have difficulties when practicing speaking skill, due to their limited vocabulary and inability to construct sentences with good grammar. Having sufficient vocabulary and good grammar is essential for effective communication however, these problems make students difficult to speak properly and correctly and make it difficult for them to express themselves during practicing speaking.

There are several strategies that are commonly used in teaching speaking skill. This may include storytelling technique, scaffolding technique, modeling, and picture describing etc. Teachers should create an engaging and supportive classroom environment that encourages students to participate and practice their speaking skills, as stated by Nazilah, Hayati, and Azizah (2025), the role of the teacher goes beyond the delivery of content; the teacher acts as the creator of a conducive learning environment and a positive classroom culture. To maximize the environment, teachers must understand what motivates students to speak up, teachers can effectively manage their classrooms, implementing strategies and techniques that encourage active participation.

Storytelling is the engaging activity of retelling a story, drawing from what one has read or experienced, as described by Dewi (2021), Rifiyanti and Hidayat (2024). According to Dewi (2021), storytelling involves the storyteller using their own words and understanding of the story. It is not only about repetition rather it

is about expressing the story personally and uniquely. Rifiyanti and Hidayat (2024), Stated that through storytelling and retelling activities, significant improvements were achieved not only in students' understanding of the material and English language skills, but also in non-linguistic aspects such as developing creativity, cross-cultural understanding, and critical thinking skills. When students apply storytelling techniques, they remember the story and produce it in their own words. This process enhances memory and encourages students' creativity, making the storytelling technique as a tool for conveying information and fostering linguistics skills as stated by Tambunan, Raja and Sari (2020), the benefits of using storytelling include improving speaking skills, listening, grammar, vocabulary, concentration and also it allows students to convey their thoughts, opinions, ideas, and hopes.

Regarding the problems above the researcher wanted to apply storytelling as an interesting technique in teaching speaking skill to the class eight of MTs Muhammadiyah Al-Haq Palu. The use of storytelling technique was assumed to be effective in improving students' speaking skill. Therefore, this proposed research was entitled "The Use of Story Telling to Improve Speaking Skill of Eight Grade Students at MTs Muhammadiyah Al-Haq Palu"

MATERIALS AND METHOD

A. Materials

1. The Importance of Teaching Speaking

Teaching speaking is one of the most important aspects of language education since it helps students build strong communication skills, allowing them to express their thoughts and ideas clearly and effectively. As stated by Leong & Ahmadi (2017) "Speaking is the most important skill because it is one of the abilities that is needed to perform a conversation". Thus students as language learners must learn to communicate effectively in both normal and stressful settings. Strategies and techniques for learning to speak English are the most significant things for students to recognize, and they are also a component of teaching speaking skills. Hence strategies and techniques should be established to improve students' English speaking skills.

A professional English teacher must consider appropriate strategies in teaching speaking. A teacher must recognize students' strategies and help them

develop their strengths to improve their oral production as stated by Ossiannilsson (2021). "Teaching strategies refer to techniques or unique ways in which teachers engage their students in various ways to encourage the teaching and learning process. These strategies help students stay engaged and help them develop a variety of skills, including language learning.". This not only requires the ability to create a warm and humanistic classroom atmosphere but also provides opportunities for students to speak or take part in class interactions. Observing the situation of students in schools whose progress in learning English is slow and lacking enthusiasm for learning, instructors must have strategies so that children can learn enthusiastically, effectively, and efficiently, to achieve the desired results.

Another important factor that also influences the students' ability to learn to speak English is teachers' techniques in teaching students to speak English. regarding to the use of storytelling technique in teaching, Shogirun, Amin, & Weda (2022), stated that "Analysis of the students' perceptions showed that the use of storytelling techniques in the English learning process had a significant effect on their perceptions of attending class. Specifically, the students found the use of storytelling techniques engaging and beneficial for their English speaking skills development."

2. Storytelling

Storytelling is a valuable tool in education, creating a warm and engaging classroom environment while offering many educational benefits. According to Farantika et al., (2021) storytelling is a hereditary tradition that must be preserved, serving not only as a means of entertainment but also as a fundamental tool for the holistic development of students. Storytelling is crucial in laying the foundation for character formation, intelligence, and spiritual growth in students, in line with its crucial role in early childhood education. Additionally, storytelling fosters a sense of humor in children, encouraging them to view their own experiences through a lighter lens, while expanding their knowledge and appreciation of different cultures, beliefs, and perspectives. The informal nature of storytelling often produces more spontaneous and satisfying discussions than formal learning, allowing for deeper exploration of topics and themes.

Furthermore, recent research by Haraschuk (2025) confirms that storytelling significantly improves language acquisition by providing authentic, engaging, and contextual learning materials. Traditional storytelling can develop listening and speaking skills while building empathy and cultural awareness. moreover, the integration of digital storytelling also supports the development of 21st-century skills such as collaboration, creativity, and digital literacy. When teachers engage students through storytelling, they not only convey information but also establish a meaningful connection with their audience, fostering a sense of engagement and receptivity among learners.

Furthermore Mawaddah, Maulina and Rusli (2025) states that storytelling has served as a powerful solution to overcome the challenges of public speaking. Storytelling not only significantly reduces speech anxiety, but increases students ' confidence, fluency and readiness to use English in the context of real communication. Thus, storytelling helps students hone their ability to articulate thoughts and clarity of belief. By immersing themselves in the narrative world, students can hone their storytelling skills, improving their ability to articulate thoughts and ideas with clarity and confidence.

Throughout history, storytelling has served as a powerful medium for communication, enchanting audiences with its magic and wonder while conveying valuable lessons about life, humanity, and the human experience. According to Farantika et al., (2021), storytelling is ancient custom that needs to be upheld since it is an essential instrument for overall development of students and promotes a stronger feeling of community and connection.

In conclusion, storytelling not only enriches the educational experience but also cultivates empathy, fosters cultural appreciation, and enhances communication skills, making it an indispensable tool for educators and learners alike.

B. Method

This research used a quasi-experimental research design, as the researcher could not perform full randomization on the sample since the classes (VIII A and VIII B) were already formed naturally within the school setting. Despite the lack of full of randomization, this research design remains effective for measuring the effectiveness of storytelling technique of students speaking skill. To execute this

study there were two groups used to compare the result, which were the experimental group and the control group. The experimental group got the treatment by storytelling technique, while the control group did not receive the same treatment as the experimental group, it was only taught with conventional techniques. The pre-test was conducted at the first meeting to find out the students' prior knowledge before carrying out the treatment, while the post-test was carried out at the last meeting to find out the progress after giving treatment. The design of the research is based on Sugiyono (2020), as follows:

O1	X	O2
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O3		O4

the population of this research was all of the eight students at MTs Muhammadiyah Al-Haq Palu which consists of 3 parallel classes each class consist of 15 students, with a total of 45 students. in conducting this research the researcher used convenience sampling. As stated by Isaac (2023), convenience sampling involves selecting samples from segments of the population that are easy to reach, close by, or easily accessible. This technique relies on the availability and willingness of individuals or groups to participate, without the application of specific criteria in the sampling process. In conducting this research, the researcher selected two groups as a sample of this research, where VIII A was the experimental Group and VIII C was the control Group.

The researcher used speaking test items as the research instruments that was administrated in pre-test and post-test which in form of speaking test. The pre-test was carried out before treatment with the aim of finding out students' prior knowledge related to speaking skills. After the researcher carrying out treatment using the storytelling technique, then the researcher conducted a post-test to measure the progress of students' speaking skills. To analyzed the data, the researcher using SPSS version 21.

RESULTS

The researcher applied pre-tests and post-tests to evaluate students' speaking skills. Both experimental and control groups participated in these tests.

Then the data were analyzed by used SPSS version 21. by comparing the results of the pre-test and post-test, the researcher able to found out whether storytelling effectively improves students' speaking skills or not.

1. Statistical Description of Tests

Table 1 Statistictal Description

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Pre-Test Experiment	15	20	70	44.00	14.041
Post-Test Experiment	15	50	90	69.33	12.228
Pre-Test Control	15	20	60	36.00	12.984
Post-Test Control	15	20	80	44.67	16.417
Valid N (listwise)	15				

Based on the table above, in the experimental class, the minimum pre-test score achieved by a student was 20 while the maximum score was 70, with a mean score of 44.00, however after the post-test was carried out in the experimental class it showed an increase with the minimum score in the experimental class showing growth with a maximum score of 50 and a maximum score of 90, and mean score 69.33. in the control class. The minimum pre-test score was 20 and the maximum score was 60, with a mean score of 36.00. After the post-test was held the control class had a minimum pre-test score of 20 and a maximum score of 80 with a mean score of 44.67. Thus it can be concluded that the mean score of post-test in the experimental class was higher than mean score post-test in the control class

2. Test of Normality

Table 2 Test of Normality

	Classes	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
		Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Students learning outcomes	Pre-Test Experiment (Storytelling)	.199	15	.114	.940	15	.379
	Post-Test Experiment (storytelling)	.208	15	.079	.914	15	.155
	Pre-Test Control (Conventional)	.158	15	.200*	.908	15	.128

	Post-Test Control (Conventional)	.173	15	.200*	.935	15	.320
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*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

The data is normally distributed if the criterion of is $\text{sig} > 0.05$. Analysis in the experimental class shows that the alternative hypothesis (H_a) is accepted, since the probability value (sig) in the pre-test class was 0.144 and the probability value (sig) in the post-test was 0.075, where both probability values (sig) was > 0.005 , this indicates that the pre-test and post-test scores distributed normal. similarly, with the analysis in the control class hypothesis (H_a) was accepted, since it shows that the probability value (sig) was normally distributed, namely $0.200 > 0.05$ both in the pre-test and in the post-test. In conclusion, based on the output in the table above, it is known that the significance value (sig) for all the data above, both in the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests, was > 0.05 , so it can be said that the research data distributed normal.

3. Homogeneity Test

Table 3 Test of Homogeneity of Variance

		Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Results	Based on Mean	,944	1	28	,340
	Based on Median	,651	1	28	,426
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	,651	1	22,815	,428
	Based on trimmed mean	,900	1	28	,351

Based on the table above, it is found that the significance value (sig) was 0,340. Since the p-value > 0.05 , then the H_a is accepted, Thus it can be concluded that the variance of the post-test data for experimental class and the post-test data for the control class was the same or homogenous.

4. Paired Sample T-test

Table 3 Paired Sample Test

		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Pre-Test Experiment	-25.333	8.338	2.153	-29.951	-20.716	-11.767	14	.000
	Post-Test Experiment								
Pair 2	Pre-Test Control	-8.667	6.399	1.652	-12.211	-5.123	-5.245	14	.000
	Post-Test Control								

Based on the results of the paired sample t-test, it was found that both classes, the experimental class and the control class, showed significant changes between the pre-test and post-test scores (sig value $0.000 < 0.05$). However, even though both classes showed significant changes, the analysis in the table above shows a striking difference in the average pre-test and post-test scores between the two classes. The experimental class got the mean score of 25.33 while the control class got the mean score of 8.66. Therefore, it can be concluded that the application of storytelling techniques applied in the experimental class succeeded in improving student learning outcomes significantly better than in the control class.

DISCUSSION

This research aims to determine the effectiveness of the storytelling technique in improving students' speaking skills which focused on aspects of vocabulary and grammar, according to Yang (2023) Grammar and vocabulary are the basis of students' English speaking skills. Correct use of grammar allows students to create clear sentences, while correct vocabulary allows for more precise and varied expressions. This research conducted on junior high school

students suggests that improving these two aspects can improve students' speaking skill.

Before receiving treatment, the speaking skills of students in class VIII MTs Muhammadiyah Al-Haq Palu was relatively low, both in the experimental class and in the control class. The pre-test results showed that the mean score of students in the experimental class was 44.00 while in the control class it was 36.00. Many students from these two classes have not mastered basic vocabulary and simple sentence structures, but in these two classes there are variations in the students' English language skills, there are also students who can speak quite well. Apart from that, the factors of anxiety, shame and fear of making mistakes also influence students' speaking skills, as state from Saputra et al., (2023) Anxiety in students when learning speaking skills can affect students' cognitive, affective, and emotional aspects, and these issues can prevent students from improving their speaking skills and participating in class. Hence this condition requires more effective learning to improve students' speaking skills.

In the experimental class, students were given treatment using storytelling techniques. During treatment, the researcher asked students to tell stories using their own words. This aims to enable students to develop their vocabulary. To make it easier for students to create their own stories, researcher also provide key sentences and highlight vocabulary that is relevant to the story being studied. The researcher also specifically teach students about the use of past tense, because the narrative text used in this treatment requires a good understanding of verb changes. According to Siavichay-Márquez & Guamán-Luna (2022) storytelling techniques allow students to practice speaking in a meaningful and enjoyable context. Through the storytelling process, students can increase their self-confidence, enrich their vocabulary and develop the ability to convey ideas and emotions in a structured and interesting way. The researcher gave students example how to tell a good story then gave them time to prepare themselves to appear. The treatment was carried out within three weeks and was carried out with learning sessions twice a week.

After receiving treatment, there was a significant increase in speaking skill in the experimental class. The post-test results showed that the mean score from the experimental class was 69.33. on the other hand, the control class also showed

an increase, but not as much as the experimental class, the average mean score for the control class was 44.67. The significant increase that can be seen from the post-test of students in the experimental class shows that storytelling techniques are effective in improving students' speaking skills. Storytelling techniques can be an effective solution for improving students' speaking skills, because storytelling techniques can encourage students to develop their ability to think, remember and practice speaking skills. This is in line with Zuhriyah, (2017) in her research who said that storytelling techniques can improve students' speaking skills in several aspects including vocabulary and grammar. Dewi (2021) also stated that storytelling techniques can be an effective solution for teachers to improve thinking skills. And speaking skills in student learning because it can encourage students to communicate, increase creativity and facilitate student involvement in the classroom. Megawati (2018) added, Teaching speaking skills through storytelling techniques can help students understand what the speaker is saying, memorize and enjoy stories in class. Students try to say the sentences they remember from the story using their own sentences, even though at first the students cannot do it.

The results of this research show that storytelling techniques can be an effective method for improving students' speaking skills, especially in the aspects of grammar and vocabulary. Thus it can be used as a consideration for using this technique in teaching and learning activities to improve the quality of learning and student learning outcomes.

CONCLUSION

The results of data analysis shows that the storytelling technique is effective in improving the speaking skills of class VIII students at MTs Al-Haq Palu, this is supported by the significance in post-test results between the experimental class and the control class where the experimental class achieved a mean score of 69.33 while the control class with a mean score of 44.67. Furthermore, the t-test results showed that student learning achievement is much lower, with a p-value of 0.00 less than the threshold of 0.05. In other words, the alternative hypothesis is accepted and the null hypothesis is rejected. This shows that the application of storytelling technique has a significant impact on students' speaking skills.

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