

Storytelling Reimagined: Investigating the Impact of Retelling on Students' Speaking Skills in an EFL Context

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ABSTRACT: This study aims to determine if using the Retelling Story technique can improve the speaking skills of grade ten students at SMA Negeri 3 Palu. This study employed a quasi-experimental research design involving 60 samples randomly selected using cluster random sampling. The samples, split equally into an experimental and a control group, were administered an oral pre-test and post-test to evaluate their speaking skills, yet only the experimental group received the intervention. The data were analyzed statistically using SPSS 26 to identify any significant differences in the students' speaking performance before and after the intervention. The findings revealed that the experimental group exhibited a significant improvement compared to the control group. Mean score of the experimental group increased from 34.67 to 52.83, and so did the control group, rising from 34.33 to 40.83. With a degree of freedom (df) of 58 and a significance level (α) of 0.05, it was found that the p value (2-tailed) was less than the α value ($0.001 < 0.05$). This suggests that the research hypothesis (H_a) is accepted and H_o is rejected. Therefore, using the Retelling Story technique can improve the speaking skills of the sampled students.

KEYWORDS: Speaking skills; Retelling Story Technique

INTRODUCTION

Speaking refers to the ability to use language to convey messages to others. This activity necessitates the involvement of two or more individuals, where participants alternate as listeners and speakers, responding to what they hear. Speaking is a communication skill that allows an individual to verbalize their thoughts and ideas. Similar to writing, speaking is a productive skill that requires courage for both in-person and remote communication. It represents a person's capacity to utilize language, which enables them to convey thoughts, information, recommendations, and emotions to their intended audience (Sembiring & Ginting, 2019; Yuriza, 2014). Thus, speaking is the aptitude to use language appropriately to articulate an opinion, idea, or emotion in order to exchange information or knowledge through oral communication.

Students need to enhance speaking skills to effectively interact with others. The ability to speak well is essential for clear communication, personal growth, achieving career goals, and academic success. It enables people to articulate their thoughts, foster connections, and engage actively in multiple areas of life, whether in educational environments or the workplace (Erniwati et al., 2024; Mega & Sugiarto, 2020). Communicating with confidence and fluency improves interaction, raises self-confidence, and unlocks new possibilities. Speaking skills are crucial in a classroom circumstance for taking part in class discussions, presenting information, and participating in research tasks, all of which play a role in achieving academic success (Akhter et al., 2020; Rao, 2019).

Enhancing students' speaking skills in English as a foreign language classroom poses some challenges. The challenges are due to linguistic issues (e.g., inadequate vocabulary, poor pronunciation, insufficient grammar skills), affective and psychological factors including interference from their native language, low motivation, and feelings of inhibition (Erniwati, et al., 2024; Widyasworo, 2019). Some research indicated the causes to the speaking problems such as the learners do not have good background knowledge of the English language (Tom et al., 2013), they are afraid to make mistakes and be judged by their EFL peers, which may lead to anxiety and lower self-esteem (Hammad & Abu Ghali, 2015), unfriendly classrooms and less practice in speaking (Afshar & Asakereh, 2016), shyness and large class size (Omar, 2023).

This paper investigates the use of Retelling Story technique and its impact on students' speaking skills. The Retelling a story is an oral exercise that employs language and gestures vividly to depict a scene in a particular order (Fikriah, 2016). This technique allows teachers to gauge the extent of students' understanding of what they hear or read (Defrioka, 2014). It is an activity that encourages students to express themselves using a large number of words, providing them with a valuable source of language experience and aiding in the recollection of what they have read. Darwisyah (2016) points out that to address challenges in using the target language, retelling a story is advised to aid language learners in enhancing their vocabulary, grammatical structures, and pronunciation skills.

Storytelling Reimagined: Investigating the Impact of Retelling on Students' Speaking Skills in an EFL Context

Previous studies employed different kinds of teaching media in their instructional approaches, offering varied challenges for the students. This current study utilized narrative texts, particularly folktales, during the interventions. The folktales are considered to be able to facilitate language acquisition and foster cultural awareness, providing a deep and captivating means of broadening one's understanding and enjoyment of the world (Irlina, 2024; Nhung, 2016). When students retell folktales, they improve their speaking skills while at the same time deepen their understanding of cultural context. Therefore, the objective of this investigation is to determine whether teaching grade ten students at SMA Negeri 3 Palu the Retelling Story through folktales may improve their speaking skills.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The concept of Retelling Stories technique was introduced by Worthy and Bloodgood in 1993. Retelling a story is an activity that encourages students to express themselves using a large number of words, providing them with a valuable source of language experience and aiding in the recollection of what they have read. According to Stoutz (2011), it is a method in which a student describes a story, commonly in their language, following the experience of reading or hearing the story to remember the incidents and elements of the story in a certain sequence, generally from start to finish. Safei (2020) points out, this technique enhances understanding, structuring of ideas, and can serve as a means of evaluation, expanding vocabulary, fostering analytical thinking, and improving overall language proficiency.

Retelling story merges learning with enjoyment, making it an effective approach. Students generally have a fondness for stories, and this strategy caters to all learners by creating a fun environment while maintaining a focus on serious learning. It acts as an effective educational resource in classroom speaking exercises, giving students the chance to engage with a wide range of crucial language and cognitive functions (Ridwan & Hasanah, 2021). It has emerged as a powerful tool for the classroom. It enables students to participate actively in the recreation of stories, fostering both social skills and academic advancement. By engaging in storytelling, students utilize language over extended periods and build narratives, which in turn fosters their language development (Hasanah et al., 2022; Nishonova, 2021).

Retelling aids students in assimilating knowledge and concepts, encompassing language and story structure. Marzuki et al. (2016) assert that it is an activity wherein students narrate the story they have encountered through reading, watching, or listening. Retelling requires learners to engage in abstract thinking, encouraging them to contemplate the broader context rather of merely addressing specific inquiries pertaining to the text. This activity offers multiple opportunities to improve their fluency, especially for students with limited English vocabulary. Individuals who encounter difficulty in articulating their thoughts will derive lessons from these experiences and endeavor to enhance their skills. Retelling enables students to construct sentences derived from the narratives they have experienced, resulting in an improved understanding of the main idea.

Regardless of the media used, the Retelling Story technique can enhance speaking skills as it requires students to engage actively in the learning process. The students expressed themselves more freely and accurately and became more engaged in responding to questions. After reading short stories, the students found that narrating their own stories was more enjoyable (Safei, 2020; Saputri et al., 2020). Furthermore, the technique of retelling through movies can enhance students' speaking abilities, encompassing various aspects such as ideas, opinions, content, language, and delivery (Hidayah, 2016). In addition, using the Retelling Story technique through picture series can enhance the students' speaking skills (Hardianti et al., 2023; Purwatiningsih, 2015).

Furthermore, there are numerous benefits of retelling stories for students (Marzuki et al., 2016). It offers a chance to analyze narratives and develop oral language skills by acquiring relevant vocabulary and speaking techniques. Students can find enjoyment in participating in learning activities through reading, watching, and listening. They can practice their speaking abilities in real-life contexts. They can also structure their thoughts based on the story they have read, watched, or listened to. Besides, they can easily expand on their ideas because they have a foundation for what to discuss from the story they have engaged with. Still, there is a drawback to incorporating retelling stories in teaching speaking skills. Generally, some students struggle to organize the story's ideas, leading them to take an excessive amount of time to speak.

METHOD

This Study employed a quasi-experimental research design called the non-equivalent control group design, involving random assignment of intact groups to treatments, not random assignment of individuals. In the non-equivalent control group design, two groups (experimental and control) undergo pre-testing, the experimental gets a treatment, and subsequently both undergo post-testing (Mills & Gay, 2019). The groups were randomly selected from 150 tenth-grade students using a cluster random sampling technique. As the researchers cannot acquire a comprehensive list of all population members due to its extensive size, the cluster sampling may be the sole viable strategy for sample selection. Each group consisted of 30 students; thus, the samples were 60 students. Both groups were administered a pre-test and a post-test. The experimental group got intervention using the Retelling Story technique, while the control group was taught conventionally.

Authentic assessment (oral performance) was used as technique of data collection with test as the main instrument. Type of the test was an oral test. It aims to assess and measure the students' speaking fluency and accuracy in pronunciation, vocabulary,

Storytelling Reimagined: Investigating the Impact of Retelling on Students' Speaking Skills in an EFL Context

and grammar. The pre-test was administered before the intervention, while the post-test was after the intervention. To assess students' speaking performance, a rubric scoring adapted from Remon (2011) was applied (Table 1). Furthermore, data obtained through the tests were analyzed using SPSS 26.

Table 1 Rubric Scoring for Speaking Test

CATEGORY	5	4	3	2	1
Grammar & Accuracy	The grammar covered in class was used to communicate effectively.	A few minor difficulties arose from needing to use the grammar studied in class.	The student uses a few complex sentences with proper form. The student needs help with irregular forms of English oral language.	Grammatical errors led to many minor difficulties or one major breakdown in communication.	Grammatical errors severely hampered communication.
Vocabulary	The vocabulary studied in class was used to express ideas eloquently.	A few minor difficulties arose from needing to use appropriate vocabulary.	Students use a moderate level of vocabulary with definite room to grow. Students have some English usage irregularities.	Some difficulties arose due to limited vocabulary and lousy fiction.	Communication could have been better due to a lack of vocabulary.
Fluency	The student acted as a facilitator, helping the conversation flow and develop.	Some minor difficulties maintaining the conversation were evident.	Students hesitate at times when communicating orally in English.	Some effort is required to maintain the conversation. There may have been a few long pauses.	Much effort was required to maintain the conversation. There may have been many long pauses.
Pronunciation	Pronunciation was clear, and inflection and expression were used to enhance communication.	No serious problem arose, but better pronunciation, inflection, and non-verbal communication were more efficient.	Students can maintain a conversation with some detail. Some errors exist; however, the meaning is clear. Students start communicating in the classroom.	Some communication problems arose due to unclear pronunciation and lack of inflection and expression. A student may have been difficult to hear.	Pronunciation, inflection, and expression confused communication students may have been difficult to hear.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

After analyzing the students' individual score for both groups on the pre-test and post-test using SPSS 26, it was found that there was a significant difference in means of both groups on the post-test. The mean score of the experimental group remarkably improved from 34.67 on the pre-test to 52.83 on the post-test. The mean score of the control group slightly improved from 34.33 to 40.83. As the mean score of the experimental group on the post-test was higher than the control group ($52.83 > 40.83$), the Retelling Story technique, so to speak, has a positive impact on the speaking skills of the sampled-students. Summary of the group statistics on the pre-test and the post-test is presented as follows.

Table 2 Group Statistics on Pre-test and Post-test

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pre-test	Control Group	30	34.33	11.477	2.095
	Experimental Group	30	34.67	9.732	1.777
Post-test	Control Group	30	40.83	13.136	2.398
	Experimental Group	30	52.83	13.241	2.417

A normally distributed sample population is necessary for the student's t-test. To ascertain whether sample data was taken from a population that is normally distributed (within a certain tolerance), a normality test is utilized. Although the following table 3 provided results of both tests of Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov's test was preferred due to the bigger samples size ($n=60$). Result of the normality test using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov's suggested that the data were normally distributed as the Asymp. sig. (2-tailed) value was greater than the significance level of 0.05 ($0.200 > 0.05$) as shown below.

Table 3 Tests of Normality

Score	Group	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
		Statistic	Df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
		.124	30	.200*	.951	30	.178
	Experimental	.121	30	.200*	.939	30	.084

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

*. This is a lower bound of the true significance

Storytelling Reimagined: Investigating the Impact of Retelling on Students' Speaking Skills in an EFL Context

Furthermore, in order to determine whether the variances (spread) of data are the same across different groups, homogeneity of variance test is performed. This statistical assumption is critical to the validity of the t-test because it allows for a single, pooled variance estimate. This study applied the Levene's test and found that the Asymp. sig. (2-tailed) value for the test was greater than the significance level of 0.05. This indicates, the equality of variance assumption is met. In other words, the variance of the post-test's scores for the control group is similar to the variance of the post-test's scores for the experimental group. Details of the test results are shown in the following table 4.

Table 4 Test of Homogeneity of Variance

		Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Score	Based on Mean	.073	1	58	.788
	Based on Median	.032	1	58	.859
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	.032	1	57.958	.859
	Based on trimmed mean	.072	1	58	.789

In addition, an independent samples t-test was conducted to compare students' speaking scores on the post-test for the control and the experimental group. There was a significance in the scores for the control group ($M=40.83$, $SD=13.136$) and the experimental group ($M=52.83$, $SD=13.241$) with conditions; $t(58) = -3.524$, $p = 0.001$. These results suggested that H_a was accepted and H_0 was rejected for the p value (2-tailed) was less than the α value ($0.001 < 0.05$). Specifically, the results suggested that when Retelling Story technique is used in speaking class, students' speaking skills improve.

Table 5 Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances						t-test for Equality of Means			
						Significance		Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
						One-Sided p	Two-Sided p			Lower	Upper
Score	Equal variances assumed	.073	.788	-3.524	58	<.001	<.001	-12.000	3.405	-18.816	-5.184
	Equal variances not assumed			-3.524	57.996	<.001	<.001	-12.000	3.405	-18.816	-5.184

DISCUSSION

The Retelling Story technique is found to be effective in enhancing students' speaking skills for some reason. Firstly, it captivates students and encourages them to engage more. Kaet et al. (2023) noted that this technique boosts students' enthusiasm for learning to speak English. When students find themselves in an enjoyable and captivating learning experience (Pratiwi et al., 2023; Sabila, 2022), their focus and involvement are heightened. They tend to be more proactive and adopt a positive mindset towards learning (Tambunan et al., 2018; Harackiewicz et al., 2016). In this way, the Retelling Story can effectively foster learning.

The Retelling Story technique also encourages discussions in the classroom, as mentioned by Kaet et al. (2023) that students benefit from this method as it engages them more actively in discussions. The shared understanding can enhance students' performance in generating new knowledge by refining existing knowledge and synthesizing additional insights. Students can benefit from collective perspectives by acquiring knowledge that supplements their explicit knowledge, ultimately enhancing their creativity (Rahmat & Jon, 2023). Thus, the Retelling Story technique possesses a collaborative nature that not only advances students' speaking abilities but also cultivates their creativity.

Moreover, the Retelling Story technique promotes instinctive speaking among students as indicated by Dos et al. (2019) that this technique can engage students with varying abilities—low, medium, and high—in spontaneous interaction and speech. This is due to the fact that the tasks involved in the lesson foster the development of spontaneous speaking skills. For instance, during the pre-telling activities, teachers create a supportive learning environment that helps alleviate students' anxiety about speaking (Wahyudi, 2017). In summary, the activities incorporated in this technique are beneficial for encouraging students to speak spontaneously.

Storytelling Reimagined: Investigating the Impact of Retelling on Students' Speaking Skills in an EFL Context

Furthermore, the Retelling Story technique is effective in enhancing students' speaking skills because it enables them to recount the story in their unique manner, which boosts their confidence to articulate. This aligns with the research findings of (Fitriyeni, 2022; Hardianti, 2019; Megawati, 2018), indicating that this technique can bolster students' self-assurance in speaking. When students utilize their own expressions while narrating the story, they can visualize the narrative as if they were personally engaged, which in turn fosters creativity. They can identify their strengths and weaknesses, contributing to increased confidence. In summary, the Storytelling technique not only instils a strong sense of assurance in students, but it also enhances their creativity and imagination.

In addition, the Retelling Story enhances understanding and retention. By involving students in narratives, the students' comprehension of stories effectively enhances and their creativity encourages as well (Bawamenewi et al., 2024). Storytelling stimulates brain regions that remain dormant when information is processed purely through traditional means. The greater the number of brain areas activated, the more probable it is that information will be firmly imprinted in long-term memory (Kot, 2023). Hence, the narrative framework and the information integrated into the mind through Retelling Story method enhance students' speaking skills

The Retelling Story technique can serve as an effective means to enhance speaking skills, yet it poses numerous difficulties for teachers and students. These hurdles may arise from insufficient engagement, struggles in crafting engaging stories, and concerns regarding cultural awareness. Depending solely on one medium for speaking exercises may restrict the growth of varied communication skills (Nanai, 2023). Several elements, such as language proficiency (including grammar, vocabulary, and prior knowledge), emotional factors (like students' traits, motivation, self-esteem, preferences, and learning styles), and the learning context significantly influence the effectiveness of this technique in developing speaking skills.

This research presents significant implications for both the research and the speaking skills instruction. Most past research concentrated on how the Retelling Story technique enhances students' speaking skills without delving into the specific traits that contribute to this improvement. The results of this study offer additional insights regarding the implementation and implications of the Retelling Story technique, enabling teachers to understand it better and make adjustments to meet their students' needs or enhance its effectiveness. Future researchers can utilize these findings to explore the use of the Retelling Story technique in teaching other language skills and components.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Conclusion

The implementation of the Retelling Story technique significantly improves the speaking performance of the tenth-grade students at SMA Negeri 3 Palu. The analysis yielded a p value (2-tailed) of 0.001, which is lower than the established significance level ($\alpha = 0.05$), thereby confirming the rejection of the null hypothesis (H_0) and acceptance of the alternative hypothesis (H_a). This result indicates that the technique is effective in fostering students' oral proficiency, particularly in enhancing their fluency and accuracy in pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary. Consequently, the Retelling Story technique can be considered a pedagogically sound approach to improving EFL learners' speaking abilities in secondary education contexts.

Suggestions

To cope with the limitation of this study, teachers can significantly assist students in enhancing their speaking skills by emphasizing activities that occur before retelling the story, instructing students through the storytelling stages, and offering constructive feedback. Besides, teachers can choose engaging and relevant stories, manage time and structures in retelling story activities, address students' difficulties and build their confidence by creating a safe and supportive learning environment.

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