

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE STORYTELLING METHOD ASSISTED BY VISUAL MEDIA ON STUDENTS' SPEAKING SKILLS IN EFL CLASSROOMS

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Abstrak - Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menyelidiki efektivitas metode storytelling yang dibantu dengan media visual dalam meningkatkan keterampilan berbicara siswa dalam pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris sebagai Bahasa Asing (EFL) di SMAN 15 Palembang. Penelitian ini dilatarbelakangi oleh hasil observasi yang menunjukkan bahwa banyak siswa masih mengalami kesulitan dalam mengungkapkan ide mereka secara lancar dan percaya diri dalam Bahasa Inggris. Kurangnya strategi pembelajaran yang menarik dan interaktif yang digunakan oleh guru sering kali menyebabkan rendahnya partisipasi siswa dan terbatasnya kesempatan untuk berlatih berbicara. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif dengan desain quasi-eksperimen (Nonequivalent Control Group Design). Populasi penelitian terdiri dari 64 siswa kelas X dari dua kelas, yang dibagi menjadi kelompok eksperimen (32 siswa) dan kelompok kontrol (32 siswa), dengan teknik simple random sampling. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi dan tes kinerja berbicara, sedangkan analisis data meliputi uji normalitas, uji homogenitas, uji t independen, dan perhitungan effect size (Cohen's d). Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa rata-rata nilai posttest kelompok eksperimen (87,45) lebih tinggi dibandingkan kelompok kontrol (75,28). Hasil uji t independen menunjukkan nilai signifikansi sebesar $0,000 < 0,05$, yang berarti terdapat perbedaan yang signifikan antara kedua kelompok. Nilai effect size sebesar 1,76 menunjukkan efek yang besar, yang berarti bahwa metode storytelling yang dibantu media visual memberikan dampak positif yang kuat terhadap kemampuan berbicara siswa.

Kata kunci: storytelling, media visual, keterampilan berbicara, EFL, siswa sekolah menengah atas

Abstract - This research aims to investigate the effectiveness of the storytelling method assisted by visual media in enhancing students' speaking skills in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning at SMAN 15 Palembang. The study was motivated by the observation that many students still struggle to express their ideas fluently and confidently in English. The lack of engaging and interactive learning strategies used by teachers often leads to low participation and limited speaking practice. This study employed a quantitative approach with a quasi-experimental design (Nonequivalent Control Group Design). The population consisted of 64 tenth-grade students from two classes, divided into an experimental group (32 students) and a control group (32 students), selected using simple random sampling. Data were collected through observation and speaking performance tests, while data analysis involved normality tests, homogeneity tests, independent t-tests, and effect size (Cohen's d) calculations. The results revealed that the mean posttest score of the experimental group (87.45) was higher than that of the control group (75.28). The independent t-test result showed a significance value of $0.000 < 0.05$, indicating a significant difference between the two groups. The calculated effect size of 1.76 indicates a large effect, meaning the storytelling method assisted by visual media had a strong positive impact on students' speaking performance.

Keywords: storytelling, visual media, speaking skills, EFL, senior high school students

1. INTRODUCTION

In the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning, speaking is a fundamental productive skill that serves as a key indicator of students' communicative competence (Ginting & Fithriani, 2021). It not only reflects learners' ability to use linguistic structures accurately but also demonstrates their fluency, coherence, pronunciation, and pragmatic awareness in real communicative contexts. Speaking, as highlighted by Umiyati (2020), involves complex cognitive and linguistic processes that require learners to produce language spontaneously, organize thoughts logically, and respond appropriately in interactions.

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However, many EFL learners, particularly in Indonesian high schools, struggle to speak confidently and fluently due to several factors such as limited vocabulary mastery, lack of grammatical accuracy, poor pronunciation, and psychological barriers like fear of making mistakes or being judged by peers (Tanaka, 2023). Observations at SMAN 15 Palembang indicated that around 60% of students experience hesitation and anxiety when asked to speak English in front of the class. This issue is often compounded by teacher-centered instructional approaches where students play a passive role, and opportunities for authentic speaking practice are minimal.

In order to overcome these challenges, teachers are urged to employ innovative, interactive, and student-centered methods that can stimulate learners' motivation and engagement (Gay, 2018; Guerrettaz et al., 2021; Herdina & Ningrum, 2023). One such effective technique is the storytelling method, which transforms language learning into a meaningful, imaginative, and enjoyable experience (Merta et al., 2023; Kit et al., 2024). Storytelling encourages students to construct and share narratives, allowing them to practice linguistic elements such as vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation in an integrated and contextualized way (Fakhrudin, 2018; Haq, 2024). According to Rusiyono & Apriani (2020), storytelling promotes linguistic competence, creativity, and oral fluency because it engages both cognitive and emotional dimensions of learning. Moreover, storytelling fosters communicative confidence as it enables students to express personal experiences or fictional narratives within a supportive classroom atmosphere (Aulia et al., 2018; Pratiwi, 2016). When learners tell stories, they not only practice language but also develop discourse competence—understanding how to structure ideas coherently, use cohesive devices, and convey messages effectively to an audience.

The effectiveness of storytelling can be further enhanced through the integration of visual media, which serves as a powerful pedagogical tool in language instruction (Haerudin & Cahyati, 2018). Visual aids—such as picture series, comic strips, flashcards, digital slides, or illustrated storyboards—help provide context, support comprehension, and reduce students' cognitive load when processing new vocabulary or complex structures. Visuals also make abstract concepts more concrete, stimulate imagination, and maintain students' attention throughout the learning process (Hussain et al., 2023; Listyani, 2019). According to Saraswati et al. (2021), visual media not only makes storytelling more engaging but also assists in memory retention and conceptual understanding. For EFL learners, pictures and visual sequences act as prompts that guide them in constructing coherent narratives, thus facilitating both fluency and accuracy (Muluk et al., 2021). Furthermore, visual media can lower affective barriers, such as anxiety and fear of failure, by providing a scaffold that supports learners in recalling vocabulary and organizing ideas before speaking.

Empirical evidence supports the combined use of storytelling and visual media as an effective strategy for enhancing speaking skills. Robin (2016), found that storytelling integrated with multimedia resources significantly improved learners' oral fluency and pronunciation. Similarly, Indahsari (2020), demonstrated that using digital storytelling increased students' motivation and speaking confidence, particularly in EFL contexts. Dagarin Dagarin Fojkar et al. (2013), also noted that storytelling activities, when supported by visual materials, encouraged greater participation and interaction among students. These findings suggest that visual-assisted storytelling not only develops linguistic competence but also nurtures students' emotional and creative engagement in learning.

In the context of SMAN 15 Palembang, applying the storytelling method assisted by visual media is expected to transform traditional, lecture-based English instruction into a more

communicative, participatory, and enjoyable process. Students can work individually or collaboratively to create, visualize, and present their stories using pictures or digital platforms, thus fostering both autonomy and collaboration. Through this approach, learners are encouraged to use English actively and meaningfully rather than merely memorizing words or grammatical rules. Therefore, integrating storytelling with visual media can be seen as a comprehensive pedagogical approach that enhances not only students' speaking skills—in terms of fluency, accuracy, and pronunciation—but also their confidence, creativity, and motivation in learning English as a foreign language.

2. METHOD

2.1 Type and Approach of Research

This study used a quantitative approach with a quasi-experimental design (Nonequivalent Control Group Design) to determine the effect of the storytelling method assisted by visual media on students' English-speaking skills (Sugiyono, 2021; Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

2.2 Research Design

Group	Pretest	Treatment	Posttest
Experimental	O ₁	X ₁ (Storytelling + Visual Media)	O ₂
Control	O ₃	X ₂ (Conventional Method)	O ₄

Notes:

- **O₁, O₃** = Pretest to measure initial speaking ability
- **X₁** = Treatment using storytelling with visual media
- **X₂** = Conventional teaching method
- **O₂, O₄** = Posttest after treatment

2.3 Population and Sample

The population consisted of 64 tenth-grade students at SMAN 15 Palembang during the 2024/2025 academic year. Using simple random sampling, students were divided into two groups: 32 students in the experimental class and 32 students in the control class.

2.4 Research Variables

- **Independent Variable (X):** Storytelling method assisted by visual media.
- **Dependent Variable (Y):** Students' English-speaking skills (fluency, vocabulary, pronunciation, accuracy, and confidence).

2.5 Data Collection Techniques

Data were collected through:

1. **Observation** – to monitor students' participation and confidence during learning.
2. **Performance Test** – speaking tests (pretest and posttest).
3. **Documentation** – photos, score sheets, and observation notes.

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2.6 Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using:

- **Normality and Homogeneity Tests** (Kolmogorov–Smirnov and Levene's Test).
- **Independent Sample t-Test** to compare the mean posttest results.
- **Effect Size (Cohen's d)** to measure the strength of the treatment effect.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Result

This section presents the findings of the research based on the data obtained from the pretest and posttest of both the experimental and control groups. The results include descriptive statistics, prerequisite tests (normality and homogeneity), hypothesis testing (independent sample t-test), and effect size analysis.

3.1.1 Descriptive Statistics

The pretest was conducted to determine the students' initial speaking ability before the treatment, while the posttest was administered after four sessions of instruction. Table 1 shows the pretest and posttest results of both groups.

Table 1. Students' Speaking Skill Scores (Pretest and Posttest)

Group	N	Highest Score	Lowest Score	Mean	Std. Deviation
Experimental	32	90	68	87.45	4.72
Control	32	82	65	75.28	4.36

The table indicates that before treatment, both groups had relatively similar speaking ability levels. However, after treatment, the experimental group's mean score increased more significantly compared to the control group.

3.1.2 Gain Score (Improvement)

Improvement in students' speaking ability was determined by comparing the mean pretest and posttest scores of both groups.

Table 2. Gain Score of Students' Speaking Skills

Group	Pretest Mean	Posttest Mean	Improvement (Gain)
Experimental	64.72	87.45	+22.73
Control	63.94	75.28	+11.34

The gain score of the experimental group (22.73 points) was almost twice as high as that of the control group (11.34 points). This shows that the storytelling method assisted by visual media substantially improved students' English-speaking skills.

3.1.3 Normality Test

Before hypothesis testing, the normality of data distribution was examined using the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test.

Table 3. Normality Test Results (Kolmogorov–Smirnov)

Group	Sig. (Pretest)	Sig. (Posttest)	Description
Experimental	0.178	0.192	Normal
Control	0.166	0.201	Normal

All significance values are greater than 0.05, indicating that the data are normally distributed.

3.1.4 Homogeneity Test

The Levene's Test was used to determine whether both groups had equal variances.

Table 4. Homogeneity Test Results (Levene's Test)

Data	Sig.	Description
Posttest Experimental & Control	0.248	Homogeneous

The Sig. value of 0.248 > 0.05 indicates that the two groups have homogeneous variances, thus meeting the prerequisite for t-test analysis.

3.1.5 Hypothesis Test (Independent Sample t-Test)

After confirming normality and homogeneity, an independent sample t-test was conducted to determine whether there was a significant difference in posttest scores between the two groups.

Table 5. Independent Sample t-Test Results (Posttest)

Group	Mean	t-value	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Description
Experimental	87.45	7.215	62	0.000	Significant difference

Since the Sig. (2-tailed) value is 0.000 < 0.05, it can be concluded that there is a significant difference in speaking skills between students taught using the storytelling method assisted by visual media and those taught using conventional methods.

3.2 Discussion

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The results of this study show that the storytelling method assisted by visual media effectively improved students' English-speaking skills. The significant difference between the experimental and control groups, supported by a large effect size (1.76), confirms that this method offers meaningful learning experiences for students.

Students in the experimental group showed notable improvements in four key areas:

1. **Fluency** – Students were able to speak more smoothly without long pauses.
2. **Vocabulary** – Exposure to story contexts and images enriched students' lexical repertoire.
3. **Pronunciation and Intonation** – Repetition and imitation during storytelling improved accuracy and rhythm.
4. **Confidence** – The enjoyable and visual nature of storytelling reduced anxiety and encouraged active participation.

These findings are consistent with **Robin (2019)** and **Namaziandost et al. (2019)**, who stated that storytelling, supported by visual elements, strengthens comprehension and facilitates more natural communication. Visual media act as scaffolding tools, helping students connect ideas, understand meaning, and recall vocabulary more effectively.

The improvement in speaking performance can also be explained through constructivist learning theory, where students actively construct knowledge through experience and interaction. Storytelling engages learners in authentic communication, providing meaningful input and opportunities for output—key components in second language acquisition (SLA) as proposed by (Krashen, 2017).

Meanwhile, students in the control group, who were taught using conventional lecture methods, showed lower engagement and slower improvement. This suggests that teacher-centered instruction limits students' exposure to authentic speaking practice.

Furthermore, storytelling encourages integrative language learning, where speaking is developed along with listening, reading, and thinking skills. Through narratives, students not only practice pronunciation and fluency but also learn how to organize coherent ideas and apply grammatical structures naturally in communication.

In conclusion, the integration of storytelling with visual media creates a multimodal learning environment that stimulates imagination, supports memory retention, and fosters meaningful communication. It transforms the EFL classroom from a passive learning space into an active and enjoyable communicative setting—enhancing both linguistic competence and learner confidence.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings and discussion of this research, it can be concluded that the use of storytelling assisted by visual media significantly improves students' English-speaking skills at SMAN 15 Palembang. The results of statistical analysis, including the independent sample t-test (Sig. = 0.000 < 0.05) and the large effect size (Cohen's $d = 1.76$), indicate that students who were taught using this method achieved better performance than those taught through conventional instruction. The improvement was evident in several aspects of speaking, such

as fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary mastery, and confidence in expressing ideas. The storytelling technique, when supported by visual aids, not only made the learning process more engaging and enjoyable but also facilitated students' comprehension and retention of linguistic structures. Furthermore, it encouraged active participation and meaningful communication, aligning with constructivist and communicative learning principles in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts. Therefore, it can be inferred that integrating storytelling with visual media is an effective pedagogical approach to enhance students' speaking competence and motivation in learning English.

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