

## THE EFFECT OF THE STORYTELLING METHOD ON STUDENTS' SPEAKING SKILLS IN SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

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### Abstract

This study seeks to assess the impact of the narrative pedagogical approach on the speaking abilities of tenth-grade students at SMAN Pakusari Jember. This research is predicated on the students' inadequate speaking proficiency, as seen by their diminished confidence and participation in oral communication. This study utilized a quantitative methodology using a one-group pretest-posttest experimental design. The participants comprised 29 kids in the tenth grade. The research tool was a speaking proficiency assessment that evaluated fluency, linguistic precision, and self-assurance in public speaking. Data were assessed by descriptive and inferential statistics to evaluate enhancement following the application of the *storytelling* method. The findings indicated a notable enhancement in students' speaking proficiency following the implementation of *storytelling*. Students exhibited increased confidence, fluency, and the capacity to articulate concepts logically. Consequently, the *storytelling* approach has been demonstrated to be an effective alternative instructional tool for improving students' speaking skills in the Indonesian language.

**Keywords:** Storytelling, speaking skills, Indonesian language learning.

### Abstrak

*Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menilai dampak pendekatan pedagogi naratif terhadap kemampuan berbicara siswa kelas sepuluh di SMAN Pakusari Jember. Penelitian ini didasarkan pada kurangnya kemampuan berbicara siswa, yang terlihat dari berkurangnya kepercayaan diri dan partisipasi mereka dalam komunikasi lisan. Penelitian ini menggunakan metodologi kuantitatif dengan desain eksperimen pretest-postes satu kelompok. Partisipan terdiri dari 29 anak di kelas sepuluh. Alat penelitian ini adalah penilaian kemampuan berbicara yang mengevaluasi kelancaran, ketepatan linguistik, dan kepercayaan diri dalam berbicara di depan umum. Data dinilai dengan statistik deskriptif dan inferensial untuk mengevaluasi peningkatan setelah penerapan metode storytelling. Temuan menunjukkan peningkatan yang signifikan dalam kemampuan berbicara siswa setelah penerapan storytelling. Siswa menunjukkan peningkatan kepercayaan diri, kelancaran, dan kapasitas untuk mengartikulasikan konsep secara logis. Akibatnya, pendekatan storytelling telah terbukti menjadi alat pengajaran alternatif yang efektif untuk meningkatkan keterampilan berbicara siswa dalam bahasa Indonesia.*

**Kata kunci:** Storytelling, Kemampuan berbicara, Pembelajaran Bahasa Indonesia

## INTRODUCTION

Speaking is an essential skill in the acquisition of the Indonesian language and plays a crucial role in oral communication. It is one of the four fundamental language competencies that students must master in learning Indonesian: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Among these four skills, speaking holds a particularly vital position as it serves as the primary medium of daily oral communication, both within and beyond academic contexts. At the Senior High School (SMA) level, speaking functions not only as a means of expressing ideas but also as an indicator of students' critical thinking, self-confidence, and linguistic competence in various social situations. Unfortunately, in educational settings, oral communication is often undervalued. The learning process tends to be teacher-centered, with limited opportunities for students to engage actively in speaking (Supriyadi, 2020). Consequently, many students demonstrate a lack of confidence and are unaccustomed to articulating their ideas orally in public.

The storytelling method has significant potential to enhance students' speaking abilities. Storytelling is not merely the act of narrating a story; rather, it is a creative process that encourages students to organize ideas, adjust expressions and intonation, and structure a coherent narrative. This method belongs to the category of active learning strategies that are communicative, interactive, and engaging. According to Iskandar and Ratnawati (2021), storytelling is a learning strategy that fosters students' confidence, increases emotional engagement, and strengthens critical thinking skills through meaningful storytelling experiences. Similarly, Wahyuni (2020) emphasizes that the storytelling method has proven effective in creating an enjoyable and interactive learning atmosphere, thereby significantly improving students' speaking proficiency. In this context, the independent variable in this study is the implementation of the storytelling method, while the dependent variable is students' speaking ability. The researcher aims to investigate the extent to which this method significantly influences the improvement of speaking skills among tenth-grade senior high school students.

Empirical evidence supporting this phenomenon is reinforced by data from the Ministry of Education and Culture (2021), which reported that 61% of Indonesian senior high school students still struggle to express their opinions orally, particularly when speaking in public. The phenomenon in question refers to students' low speaking ability and lack of self-confidence in formal oral communication contexts, especially when required to express their opinions in front of others or during classroom activities, where they tend to be passive and less confident in formal speaking situations. Furthermore, findings from the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) also indicate that Indonesian students' oral communication skills remain below the average level of OECD countries (OECD, 2018).

This study primarily examines the decline in students' confidence when speaking in public and participating in classroom discussions. Preliminary observations and conversations with Indonesian language teachers at a senior high school revealed that many students feel uncomfortable, fear making mistakes, or prefer to remain silent due to

their limited understanding of how to articulate their thoughts verbally. They tend to be passive when asked to share their opinions and often rely on a small number of students who actively participate in speaking activities.

Several previous studies have also demonstrated the effectiveness of the storytelling method. Research conducted by Rahmawati (2019) revealed that the implementation of storytelling significantly improved students' activeness and speaking ability at the junior high school level. Another study by Indah and Suhartono (2020) found that storytelling created a more communicative classroom atmosphere and increased students' confidence in speaking. Furthermore, Yuliani (2021), in her study at the senior high school level, reported a significant improvement in sentence structure and vocabulary mastery after students were regularly engaged in storytelling activities. However, these studies generally focused only on aspects of confidence or activeness and have not explicitly examined speaking skills in a measurable format through pre-test and post-test designs, particularly among tenth-grade senior high school students using an experimental quantitative approach.

Therefore, based on the aforementioned background, the researcher was motivated to conduct a study entitled "The Effect of the Storytelling Method on the Speaking Ability of Tenth-Grade Senior High School Students." This study aims to determine the extent to which the implementation of the storytelling method can contribute to improving students' speaking skills in a measurable way. It is expected that the findings of this research will serve as an alternative learning strategy that is practical, innovative, and aligned with the current needs of Indonesian language learning at the senior high school level.

## **METHODS**

This study employed a quantitative approach with a one-group pretest–posttest experimental design. The research was conducted at SMAN Pakusari Jember and involved 30 students from Class X-8 as the subjects. The instrument used was a speaking proficiency assessment administered in two stages: a pretest conducted before the implementation of the storytelling technique and a posttest administered after its application. The assessment consisted of 15 multiple-choice questions and 3 essay items designed to evaluate students' speaking fluency, linguistic accuracy, and willingness to articulate their viewpoints in public. Descriptive and inferential statistical analyses were utilized to evaluate the pretest and posttest data, assessing the impact of the storytelling method on the improvement of students' speaking abilities. The research procedure was carried out systematically, beginning with the design phase, followed by the implementation of the storytelling method, and concluding with the evaluation of students' learning outcomes.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Storytelling or the narrative technique, is an educational approach that employs narrative delivery to convey messages, values, and facts in an engaging and communicative

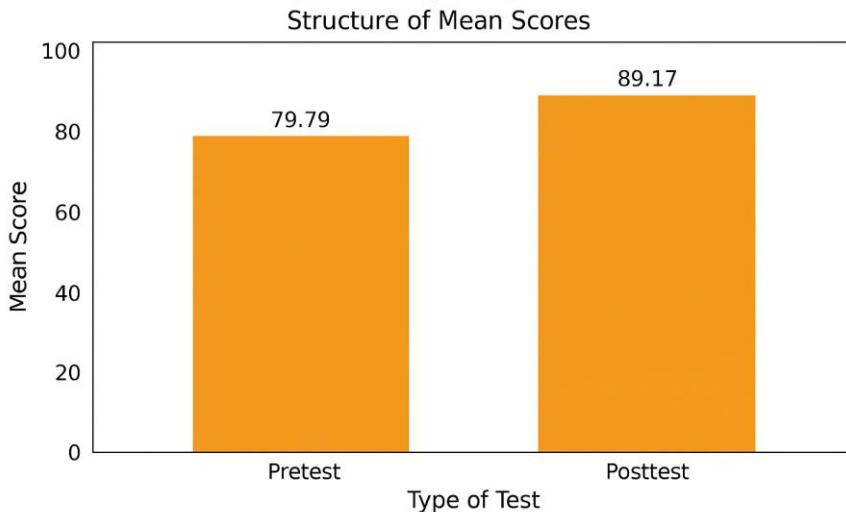
manner. Isbell et al. (2004) assert that storytelling is the art of communicating narratives to an audience through verbal language, expressions, and gestures with the purpose of entertaining, educating, and inspiring creativity. In the educational context, storytelling extends beyond mere narrative reading; it encompasses dynamic interaction between educators and learners.

This strategy encourages students to comprehend the substance of a narrative, articulate it in their own words, and engage emotionally in the learning process. Storytelling serves as an effective pedagogical approach to enhancing language proficiency—particularly speaking—because it fosters rational thinking, imaginative engagement, and the confident, expressive articulation of ideas among students. Moreover, storytelling aligns with the communicative approach to language acquisition, which prioritizes the application of language in authentic and meaningful contexts rather than mere memorization of grammatical patterns. Speaking, as a linguistic competence, functions as a fundamental instrument of verbal communication. Tarigan (2008) defines speaking as the ability to produce coherent sounds or words to articulate, communicate, and respond to the thoughts, emotions, and aspirations of others. Speaking skills encompass various linguistic elements, including vocabulary mastery, grammatical accuracy, pronunciation, and intonation, alongside non-linguistic factors such as confidence, fluency, and the ability to organize content so that it is easily understood by listeners.

In the educational domain, speaking ability serves as a crucial metric for effective language acquisition, as it integrates cognitive reasoning and interpersonal skills. Students with proficient speaking competence are generally more capable of articulating their viewpoints, engaging in conversations, and demonstrating confidence in expressing ideas. Therefore, speaking instruction must be structured in an interactive, contextual, and communicative manner to ensure that students are not only able to articulate formally but also to engage effectively in diverse communicative scenarios. This study aims to assess the impact of the Storytelling learning approach on the speaking abilities of tenth-grade senior high school students. The study matrix indicates that a quantitative experimental method was employed, utilizing a one-group pretest–posttest design in which a single group received treatment through the storytelling method, and speaking skills were evaluated before and after the intervention. Data were obtained from the results of

speaking assessments administered to 29 students, with score ranges between 0 and 100. The test assessed five main aspects of speaking ability: (1) fluency, (2) linguistic accuracy, (3) vocabulary, (4) intonation and pronunciation, and (5) the ability to convey

Comparison of the Mean Scores of Pretest and Posttest  
Using the Storytelling Method



ideas coherently.

The results of the pre-test and post-test indicate an improvement in scores for most students. The mean score before the treatment (pre-test) was 79.79, while the mean score after the implementation of the Storytelling approach (post-test) increased to 89.17, reflecting an average gain of 9.38 points. The score distribution also demonstrated a positive shift. The standard deviation of the pre-test scores was 13.19, whereas the post-test standard deviation decreased to 11.31, indicating a slight reduction in score variability among students. This suggests that, in addition to enhancing the average performance, the Storytelling technique also contributed to greater consistency and stability in students' learning outcomes. To address the question "To what extent does the Storytelling method influence students' speaking skills (effect size)?", a Paired Sample t-test was conducted to determine the significance of the difference between pre-test and post-test scores. Additionally, Cohen's  $d$  was calculated to measure the magnitude of the effect of the Storytelling method on students' speaking proficiency.

Based on the results of the Paired Sample t-test, the following findings were obtained:

- Calculated  $t$ -value ( $t_{hitung}$ ) = 4.308
- $p$ -value = 0.000183 ( $p < 0.05$ )

Thus,  $H_0$  is rejected and  $H_1$  is accepted, indicating a significant difference between the pretest and posttest results. This means that the Storytelling method has a statistically significant effect on improving the speaking skills of tenth-grade high school students. Furthermore, the calculation of the effect size using Cohen's  $d$  = 0.80 demonstrates that the impact is categorized as large. According to Cohen's (1988) interpretation:

- $d = 0.2 \rightarrow$  small effect
- $d = 0.5 \rightarrow$  medium effect
- $d = 0.8 \rightarrow$  large effect

An effect size of 0.80 indicates that approximately 79% of students in the posttest group achieved higher scores than the average score of students before the treatment. This reflects a substantial improvement that cannot be attributed merely to chance or individual variation. Therefore, the implementation of the Storytelling method exerts a strong influence on enhancing students' speaking abilities, both in terms of statistical significance and practical effect strength. The above findings demonstrate that the Storytelling method is effective in improving students' speaking skills. Several factors may account for these results, including:

#### a. Psycholinguistic Aspects

According to Henry Guntur Tarigan (2008), speaking is a productive and expressive language skill in which the processes of thinking and language operate simultaneously to produce meaningful utterances. From a psycholinguistic perspective, speaking is not merely the act of pronouncing words but the result of coordination among cognitive aspects (such as word selection and sentence structuring), affective aspects (such as courage and self-confidence), and social aspects (such as adapting to context and interlocutors). The findings of this study indicate an increase in students' average speaking scores from 79.79 to 89.17 after the implementation of the Storytelling method, with a Cohen's  $d$  value of 0.80—classified as a large effect. This improvement illustrates that the Storytelling method plays a significant role in activating students' psycholinguistic processes.

In practice, storytelling encourages students to integrate cognitive reasoning, imagination, and emotional expression through structured language use. Students not only construct grammatically correct sentences but also adjust intonation, expression, and emotional nuance within the storytelling context. This demonstrates that Storytelling effectively trains linguistic competence as a complex mental process, allowing students to naturally and meaningfully connect thought with verbal expression.

#### b. Affective Aspects and Motivation

The affective aspect constitutes a crucial factor in speaking instruction, as it is directly related to students' confidence, motivation, and willingness to express themselves. Based on classroom observations, students who were initially passive and hesitant to speak became more active, confident, and expressive after several sessions of storytelling activities. The enjoyable and supportive classroom atmosphere encouraged students to articulate their ideas freely without fear of making mistakes.

These findings align with Krashen's (1982) *Affective Filter Hypothesis*, which posits that positive emotional conditions lower the affective filter, thereby facilitating more effective language acquisition. Consequently, storytelling directly contributes to enhancing

students' self-confidence. Through narratives that they understand and enjoy, learners are encouraged to demonstrate expression, intonation, and improvisation, ultimately fostering intrinsic motivation to speak more fluently. This result corresponds with the observed increase in mean scores and students' significantly higher participation during the learning process.

### c. Cognitive Aspects

From a cognitive perspective, storytelling activities assist students in organizing ideas, recalling story sequences, and constructing coherent sentence structures. This process strengthens the connection between logical thinking and linguistic ability. The results of the Paired Sample t-test ( $t (28) = 4.308$ ;  $p = 0.000 < 0.05$ ) indicate a significant difference between pretest and posttest scores, suggesting that students' thinking and language abilities improved simultaneously. Storytelling trains students to comprehend textual content and transform it into personal narratives expressed orally. This aligns with Swain's (1985) *Output Hypothesis*, which posits that speaking ability develops when learners actively produce language (output), rather than merely receiving input. Thus, storytelling serves as a platform for students to practice productive communication, reinforcing memory, logical reasoning, and linguistic accuracy.

Overall, the findings of this study demonstrate that storytelling not only enhances linguistic aspects but also optimizes students' psycholinguistic, affective, and cognitive capacities in an integrated manner—resulting in significant improvement in their speaking abilities, particularly in fluency, confidence, and mastery of language structure. Supporting evidence comes from Fitriani's (2022) study, which found that the application of storytelling in senior high school English instruction significantly improved speaking fluency and vocabulary mastery. Similarly, Rahmawati's (2023) research at the junior high school level reported an average increase of 11 points in speaking scores following the implementation of culture-based storytelling. This study extends previous findings by situating the application of the Storytelling method within the context of Indonesia's *Merdeka Curriculum*, which emphasizes project-based learning and student self-expression. Consequently, the results of this research have direct relevance to the current direction of national education policy.

From a cognitive standpoint, storytelling facilitates the internalization of language through a clear narrative structure (beginning, middle, and end). As students construct and retell stories, they implicitly practice organizing ideas, developing logical sequencing, and using appropriate conjunctions. This aligns with Swain's (1985) *Output Hypothesis*, which posits that speaking ability develops when learners actively produce language (output), rather than merely receive input. Therefore, storytelling serves as an effective medium for practicing productive communication.

The findings of this study are consistent with those of Dimiyati et al. (2025), who reported that the Storytelling method effectively improves literacy among elementary school students. Although the contexts differ (literacy skills vs. speaking ability), the underlying

principle remains the same—storytelling encourages students to comprehend, interpret, and express ideas in a structured manner. Similarly, Fitriani's (2022) study found that the implementation of storytelling in senior high school English learning enhanced students' speaking fluency through improved self-confidence and vocabulary mastery. In summary, the present study reinforces existing literature and contributes a new perspective by applying the Storytelling method within Indonesia's local *Merdeka Curriculum* framework. Based on the analysis and interpretation, several important implications can be drawn:

a. Theoretical Implications

This study provides empirical evidence that storytelling is not merely a language teaching strategy but also a communicative learning approach that supports Tarigan's (2008) view of speaking as a productive and expressive skill. The improvement in students' speaking abilities indicates that language acquisition depends not only on mastering linguistic structures but also on the ability to think, imagine, and express ideas meaningfully. Furthermore, the findings reinforce Swain's (1985) *Output Hypothesis*, which asserts that language proficiency develops when learners actively produce language (output) in authentic contexts. Therefore, storytelling can be regarded as a pedagogical approach that holistically integrates cognitive, affective, and psycholinguistic aspects in speaking instruction.

b. Practical Implications for Teachers

For Indonesian language teachers, the findings of this study highlight the importance of implementing the Storytelling method as an interactive and contextual alternative for teaching speaking skills. Teachers are encouraged to act as facilitators who create a communicative learning environment and foster students' confidence to speak in public. In practice, teachers can utilize folk tales, students' personal experiences, or modern narrative texts as speaking practice materials. Storytelling activities can also be integrated with Project-Based Learning (PBL), for example, through group assignments involving script writing, dramatization, or video recording of speaking performances. Learning evaluation can be conducted continuously using performance rubrics that assess fluency, linguistic accuracy, intonation, and confidence. With proper implementation, the Storytelling method can assist teachers in developing students' communication abilities—particularly in terms of critical thinking, creativity, and effective communication.

c. Implications for Students

For students, the implementation of the Storytelling method provides broad opportunities to practice speaking skills in a natural, expressive, and meaningful way. Through storytelling activities, students learn to organize ideas, adjust intonation, and express emotions and meanings according to the context of communication. This process fosters self-confidence, intrinsic motivation, and critical thinking skills that form the foundation of speaking competence. In addition, storytelling helps students overcome awkwardness

and speaking anxiety in public. They learn to appreciate the role of the listener, adapt to communicative situations, and use language effectively. Repeated practice strengthens vocabulary mastery, sentence structure, and improvisation skills. Thus, Storytelling not only enhances students' linguistic competence but also develops communicative, creative, and confident character traits essential for academic and social life.

Based on statistical analysis and theoretical interpretation, it can be concluded that the Storytelling learning method has a significant and substantial effect on improving the speaking ability of 10th-grade high school students. Statistically, there was an increase in the mean score from 79.79 to 89.17 with  $t(28) = 4.308$  and  $p = 0.000 < 0.05$ . Meanwhile, the Cohen's  $d$  value of 0.80 indicates that the effect of the Storytelling method falls into the large effect category.

The findings of this study provide empirical evidence that Storytelling can serve as an effective medium to implement these competencies. Storytelling-based learning is also in line with the principles of differentiated instruction, as it allows students with different learning styles (auditory, visual, and kinesthetic) to express themselves according to their potential. Teachers can adjust the complexity of stories to match students' abilities without diminishing the communicative essence. In addition to the main analysis, it can be observed that there is a positive correlation between pretest and posttest scores, indicating that students with higher initial abilities maintained their advantage, while those with lower initial scores showed greater proportional improvement. Therefore, the Storytelling method functions as an equalizer that helps all students achieve the expected standard of speaking competence.

## CONCLUSION

The data indicate that the Storytelling learning approach has a significant impact on the speaking skills of 10th-grade high school students. The increase in the mean score from 79.79 to 89.17, with  $t(28) = 4.308$  and  $p = 0.000 < 0.05$ , alongside a Cohen's  $d$  value of 0.80, demonstrates a substantial effect both in practice and theory. Consequently, it can be affirmed that storytelling is not merely a form of entertainment but an effective instructional strategy to enhance students' communicative competence, critical thinking, and self-expression. Within the framework of the Independent Curriculum, these findings provide empirical evidence that humanistic and creative learning significantly fosters the development of students' language skills. Future research may explore the application of the Storytelling approach in relation to other language competencies, such as writing or reading, to deepen understanding of the method's overall efficacy.

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