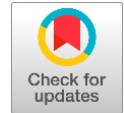


Special Issue: Educational articles from Asian and European countries

The effectiveness of the storytelling technique on students' achievement and motivation in English speaking skills

Nguyen Thi Thao Hien^a | Vo Tu Phuong^b  ^aUniversity of Social Sciences & Humanities, Vietnam National University-Ho Chi Minh City, 10-12 Dinh Tien Hoang Street, district 1, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam.^bUniversity of Khanh Hoa 01 Nguyen Chanh Street, Loc Tho Ward, Nha Trang City, Khanh Hoa Province, Viet Nam.

Abstract Storytelling has been recognized as a useful technique for addressing typical challenges that students encounter in speaking English. As part of a three-month study, this technique was applied in teaching English speaking to 80 seventh-grade students from the American Study English Center in Ho Chi Minh City. This research aims to investigate the effectiveness of storytelling techniques on A2-level students' achievement and motivation in English-speaking skills. The data were collected through the pretest and posttest during the 3-month intervention period and through questionnaires with a total of 80 participants. The findings revealed that the majority of the participants made great improvements in speaking skills by employing storytelling techniques, boosting speaking proficiency. The questionnaires also indicated that the storytelling technique integrated with students' motivation improved their confidence and eagerness to speak up.

Keywords: storytelling technique, speaking skills, motivation, achievement English, language

1. Introduction

In this age of globalization, English is crucial as a global language (Khaled, 2020). The number of English foreign language (EFL) learners has increased rapidly. They learn English for various reasons, and being able to speak fluently and appropriately is considered one of the most important goals that English learners would like to achieve in their learning journey. According to Nunan (2005), speaking fluency is seen as the most important skill to master when learning English as a second language, and success is determined by one's ability to carry on a conversation in the target language. To accomplish the goals of English teaching and learning as outlined in the current curriculum, Schunk (2012) claimed that students must have a strong speaking competence. Because students are the driving force behind the development of each nation's intellectual assets (Dung et al., 2023). Making an effort to learn means changing one's knowledge, abilities, approaches, attitudes, and behaviors (Zang et al., 2022; Purnell & Hughes, 2023; Tavakkalova, 2023). Cognitive, verbal, physical, and social abilities are all acquired by learners and come in many different forms. In recent years, students in communicative classes have been needed to use the language productively and confidently. Thus, creating interesting activities to increase students' engagement and confidence in speaking is still a major challenge for English teachers.

In Vietnam, many nonnative speaker students have difficulties speaking English, even though they have spent many years studying English at schools or English centers. One of the significant reasons might be the lack of an attractive and productive environment, which provides them with the necessary and memorable input for their speech later. In some cases, students have enough input information, but they cannot arrange ideas and convert the ideas into complete and logical sentences. To create an attractive environment, the storytelling technique can be a useful tool for English-speaking classes.

In other words, learners at the A2 level have a certain amount of linguistic background for basic communication. However, the A2 level students still have problems speaking English. First, most of the students cannot participate in speaking English to express their opinion, even though they understand what they are needed to do. Second, they said that they had difficulties speaking because of their shyness and lack of speaking practice in class. Some said that they had no motivation to learn to speak because, in the final examination, they were not examined for their speaking competence, only their reading and writing competence. Therefore, it makes it hard to learn English and become passive participants who just learn English on its surface, not deeper than that condition affecting the students' scores.

To improve the speaking ability of students, there are many techniques that can be used, such as practicing dialogs, playing games, singing songs, storytelling, oral reporting, role-playing, small group discussions, giving speeches, news



reading, poetry reading, and debates. However, there are few studies on the effectiveness of storytelling techniques on students' performance and motivation. According to Handayani (2010), storytelling can motivate students to explore their unique expressiveness and can strengthen a student's ability to communicate thoughts and feelings in an articulate, lucid manner. This study chose the storytelling technique because of its practicality with the hope of investigating the positive characteristics of storytelling on students' performance and motivation in English-speaking skills for students at the American Study English Center.

Hopefully, the results of this study can be a useful reference for stakeholders to address difficulties in English speaking skills by applying storytelling techniques; specifically, for administrators to improve the curriculum, teachers to implement effective teaching techniques, students to self-regulate their learning, and researchers to conduct further research.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Definition of Storytelling

Storytelling is one of the oldest forms of human communication, and much has been said in the literature about its effectiveness as a pedagogical tool in the development of language skills in a first (L1) language and in a foreign or second language (L2), regardless of learners' age or background (e.g., Isbell et al., 2004; Cameron, 2001). Indeed, stories in a learner's first language (L1) can help develop various language skills, such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Through exposure to stories, learners can learn new vocabulary, grammar structures, and language functions in a meaningful and contextualized way. Stories can also be effective in developing language skills in a foreign or second language (L2). Listening to or reading stories in the L2 can improve learners' comprehension, pronunciation, and speaking skills. Stories can also expose learners to the cultural aspects of the target language, enhancing their cultural understanding and intercultural competence. Storytelling can benefit language development regardless of learners' age or background (Goodrich et al., 2023; Sandgren et al., 2023; Cruzado-Guerrero & Martínez-Alba, 2022). Whether children, adolescents, or adults, learners of different ages can benefit from stories tailored to their age and language proficiency level. Stories can be adapted to suit the cultural, cognitive, and linguistic needs of learners from diverse backgrounds, making them versatile tools for language development.

According to Ohler (2013), storytelling is the use of stories or narratives as a communication tool to value, share, and capitalize on the knowledge of individuals. Stories provide a powerful metaphor, framework, and set of practical processes for resolving issues, educating ourselves, and pursuing our goals. Storytelling can be a powerful element of the communication process, being equal to textbooks and essays. In other words, storytelling is considered a tool for people to transfer their experiences and the opinions of others. It is believed that storytelling is important for societies, politics, and education. Stories are how people understand themselves (Ståhl et al., 2023; Harper & Kayumova, 2023; Blyth & Aslanian, 2022) and their worlds.

Additionally, Kim (2010) conducted a six-week study to explore the role of storytelling in enhancing the language skills of adults learning English as a Second Language (ESL) and the impact of learners' interest in learning ESL on the improvement of their language skills. Five undergraduate and graduate learners, at a basic English level, were used as participants in this small-scale study. Kim noticed that three out of the five participants in his study strongly enjoyed storytelling activities. Kim's (2010) study demonstrates that storytelling may play an important role in helping learners improve their language skills in a second language. In short, storytelling provides a meaningful and contextualized circumstance for language learning, which can enhance various language skills, including listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

2.2. The procedure of applying storytelling to teaching English-speaking

We think that storytelling can be a highly effective approach to teaching English speaking. Stories provide meaningful and relatable contexts for language use. Learners can understand new vocabulary, grammar, and expressions within the context of the narrative, making it easier to remember and apply in real-life situations. Stories capture learners' attention and imagination, making the learning process enjoyable and engaging (Demirbilek et al., 2022); (Sutrisno & Nasucha, 2022). When students are interested in the story's content, they are more likely to be motivated to participate actively in language learning activities. Stories often use authentic language patterns and conversational styles, reflecting how native speakers use English in real-world settings. This exposure helps learners become familiar with natural language structures and intonations. Stories evoke emotions and create connections with the characters and plot. This emotional engagement can enhance memory retention and make language learning more meaningful. Through storytelling, learners have ample opportunities to practice both listening and speaking skills. Teachers can read the story aloud, and students can participate in discussions, role-play, and retelling activities. Stories often carry cultural elements and perspectives, helping learners gain insight into the culture of English-speaking countries. This cultural understanding contributes to effective communication and cultural sensitivity. Storytelling encourages learners to use their creativity and imagination to retell or extend the story. This creative expression allows them to experiment with language and become more confident English speakers. Repetition is essential in language learning, but traditional drilling exercises can become monotonous. Storytelling provides a way to

repeat language elements without feeling tedious, as the content is engaging and varied. Storytelling can incorporate visuals, gestures, and even props, appealing to various learning styles and making the language learning experience more holistic. Stories create memorable experiences, making language learning more likely to be retained in the long term. Learners can recall and retell stories they enjoyed long after the lesson, reinforcing their language skills. Here is a general procedure for applying storytelling in English language teaching.

Select appropriate stories: Choose stories that are appropriate for the learners' age, language level, and interests. Consider the length of the story, the complexity of the language, and the cultural relevance for the learners.

Miller (1996) illustrates the procedure of delivering a speaking class by using storytelling as follows:

- 1) The teacher prepared a scenario by providing various narrative stories.
- 2) The teacher asked the students to study the scenario before teaching the learning process.
- 3) The teacher asked the students to make a group of 4 or 5 related to the number of characters in the story.
- 4) The teacher explained the competencies that will be achieved after the learning process.
- 5) The teacher asked the students in the group to improve the narrative text into a transactional story script.
- 6) The teacher checked the students' transactional script to correct the grammar, vocab, diction, and appropriateness of the context.
- 7) The students created puppets as a media aid in presenting the story.
- 8) The teacher asked the students to practice the scenario at home continuously until they became fluent.
- 9) The students did the scenario by storytelling presentation in front of the class
- 10) The audience listened to the other group presentations while they made a peer observation by filling out the observation form about their friends' presentations.
- 11) The teacher observed each presentation by giving a score on their presentation. (The scoring included pronunciation, intonation, grammar, vocabulary, accuracy, and fluency) based on the scoring rubric of speaking.
- 12) There were questions and answers after the presentation about the moral value of the story.
- 13) The teacher and the students made the conclusion about the story itself and the presentation.
- 14) The teacher gave feedback and made a reflection together.

2.3. Factors affecting students' achievement in English speaking skills

According to Al-Tamimi (2014), the achievement of students is currently a hot topic in education, particularly in the context of increasing accountability for instructors in the classroom. Becoming an effective teacher requires understanding what characterizes student achievement and what influences learning. Although there are many factors that can affect a student's success, classroom instruction and learning difficulties are the most important. It is essential to keep in mind that not all students learn in the same way or at the same speed. The leaves on a tree are similar to those of students in that no two are exactly the same. Each student has a different learning style, just like each leaf, which has a different color, shape, and size.

The teacher must understand each student's history and unique needs while utilizing a variety of instructional techniques. Furthermore, the greatest influence on students' academic success is classroom instruction. As a teacher, one can shape the caliber of education, establish learning goals, and assess student comprehension. For instance, it can be exceedingly challenging for a student to obtain the necessary level of success when a standard is not provided in a way that kids can grasp or in a boring way.

A skilled teacher will engage students' attention and facilitate learning by using techniques such as class discussion, movies, or storytelling. He or she should always be considering creative ways to make studying suitable and enjoyable. The student may prepay for their cleaning to receive a discount, for instance, or join a friend to make the study session more entertaining by looking at our to-do list. Similarly, students' success depends on well-planned methods to raise the standard of education.

2.4. Factors affecting students' motivation in English speaking skills

Academic success is not just determined by intelligence. Reduced dropout rates and higher levels of student performance have repeatedly been associated with high levels of motivation and involvement in the classroom. Due to its inherent significance for future motivation and for children's successful school functioning, educators place a high priority on the development of academic intrinsic motivation in early childhood (Johnson, 1981). It is critical to examine the concept of intrinsic motivation in young elementary school students because academic intrinsic motivation in the early elementary years may have major effects on both immediate and long-term academic success.

According to Ababio (2013), motivation is crucial in the teaching-learning process for two reasons: (a) It becomes the primary concern of effective teachers who want their students to become engaged in certain kinesthetic, intellectual, and aesthetic activities and demonstrate related provable behavior after formal teaching has concluded - that is, it stresses the

development of students' cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains, which comprise the fundamental objective of formal teaching.

3. Theoretical Framework

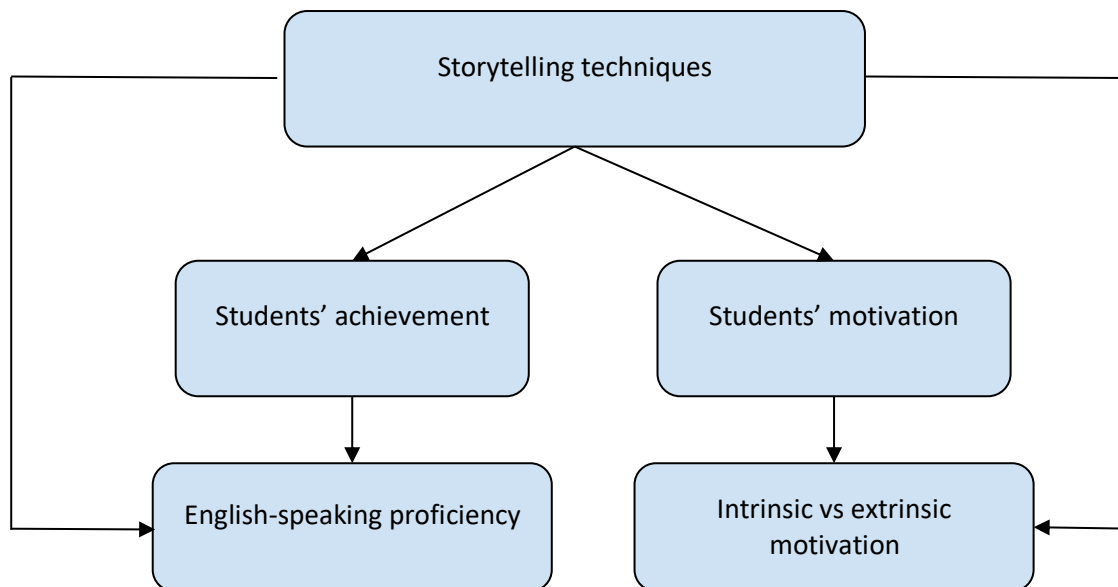


Figure 1 Model of storytelling technique on students' achievement and motivation.

4. Research Questions

In this article, we will focus on answering the following questions: (1) How does the storytelling technique impact students' motivation to learn and improve their English-speaking skills compared to traditional language learning methods? (2) How does the storytelling technique affect students' confidence levels in using English as a means of communication? (3) Does the effectiveness of the storytelling technique vary across different age groups or educational levels?

5. Methods

5.1. Research design

This study followed the experimental design and was applied to four groups (two experimental groups and two control groups). Based on the design, the independent variables referred to the storytelling technique, while there was one dependent variable, which was students' English-speaking skills. The experimental groups were taught using the storytelling technique, while the control groups received the traditional method.

5.2. Participants

This study is conducted at The American Study, which is one of the most prestigious and leading English centers in Ho Chi Minh City. It provides students of different ages with high-quality and well-designed English courses including communication and test preparation for Cambridge exams: STARTERS, MOVERS, and FLYERS.

The sample of the study consisted of 80 participants who were learners at the A2 level in the American Study with an age range of 8 - 10 and were divided into four groups: two experimental and two control groups by using simple random sampling. All participants were nonnative speakers of English. They had been learning English for approximately 5 years and had a similar socioeconomic environment.

5.3. Research instruments and procedure

This study uses the following tools:

- 1- Pretest to determine the aspects that students need to improve
- 2- Posttests to measure the effect of storytelling technique on achievement of English-speaking skills
- 3- A questionnaire used to measure students' motivation.

Both the pretest and posttest were adapted from the Flyers Speaking Test held by the Cambridge ESOL Assessment. The test involves 4 parts: understanding and talking about differences between pictures; answering questions with short answers; describing pictures than telling the stories; and responding to personal questions.



At the beginning of the study, all of the participants attended the American Study English Center’s placement test. After the selection process, the parents of the experimental EFL learners were notified that their children would be taught by a different approach. For the study itself, the lesson plan for the experimental group had three sections: preteaching, while-teaching, and postteaching stages.

In the prestorytelling stage, the teacher arranged the classroom for storytelling. Before reading the stories, the participants received interesting and comprehensible input through the teacher’s talk, games, reading, and listening activities, which helped them become familiar with the new language. These were prepared by the teacher in advance. During this time, the participants learned the key vocabulary via pictures and gestures. Once the participants had identified the new words, the teacher started telling the story.

In the while-storytelling stage, the teacher introduced the stories. While reading them, the teacher directed the participants’ attention to the PowerPoint presentation, which included a visual representation of the story to facilitate the comprehension process. The teacher introduced the story by making comments and gestures and asking the participants about it to assess their prior knowledge. While telling the story, the teacher asked the participants to point to the words and to show the pictures to make connections between the story and the illustrations.

In the poststorytelling stage, the teacher played vocabulary games with the participants and asked them to role-play the story by memorizing the dialogs. According to Curtain and Dahlberg (2004), this can help improve the proficiency level of the students to a great extent, as it can help the acquisition of different grammatical points along with the new words.

5.4. Data analysis method

After administering the test at the end of the treatment, the raw scores were submitted to SPSS 22 software for further analysis. Then, a t test was employed to analyze the collected data and to determine whether the treatment was effective and helpful. For the second research question, participants completed questionnaires regarding their interest in participating in class activities, and the results were analyzed and compared in all classes to determine how they were different.

6. Results and Discussion

6.1. Results of Pretest for Both Groups

The results from the pretest exam were statistically analyzed. An independent samples t test was run to investigate the achievement of the participants on English speaking skills. This t test was intended to compare the obtained mean scores of the participants in the control and experimental groups. Group statistics and the results of the t test are presented in Tables 1 and 2, respectively:

Table 1 Results of the pretest exam given to both groups.

	Achievement	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Experimental		40	3.0000	1.19829	.18947
Pretest Control		40	3.2000	1.04268	.16486

Given the information in Table 1, it can clearly be seen that the mean score obtained on the pretest for the control group learners (3.2000) is negligibly higher than that obtained on the pretest for the experimental group learners (3.0000). The mean scores on the pretest for both groups indicate that all participants were almost homogeneous at the outset of the study. However, an independent samples t test was run to ensure that the observed differences were not significant. Table 2 shows if there is any significant difference between the means of the two groups:

As shown in Table 2, the results from the pretest scores show that there is no significant difference between the means of the pretest scores.

Table 2 Independent samples t test for both groups.

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances				t test for Equality of Means				
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Pretest	Equal variances assumed	.312	.578	-.796	78	.428	-.20000	.25115	-.70000	.30000
	Equal variances not			-.796	76.538	.428	-.20000	.25115	-.70015	.30015



assumed

6.2. Results of Posttest for Experimental and Control Groups

The performance of the control and experimental groups on the posttest was also analyzed using an independent samples t test statistical procedure. The participants' achievement scores were calculated, and their improvement on the posttest was compared. The detailed analysis is demonstrated in the following section:

Table 3 Results of the posttest exam given to both groups.

	Achievement	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Experimental		40	3.95000	.74936	.11848
Post test Control		40	3.7000	.75786	.11983

As demonstrated in Table 3, the mean score obtained on the achievement posttest for the experimental group learners (3.95) is higher than that obtained on the post test for the control group learners (3.7). The mean score on the posttest for both groups indicates that all participants had made some improvements as the result of the treatments at the end of the study. However, an independent samples t test was run to establish whether the differences between the mean scores are statistically meaningful.

Table 4 Independent samples t test for the control and experimental groups.

	F	Sig.	t	Std. Error Difference
Equal variances assumed	.598	.442	1.484	.16852
Pretest Equal variances not assumed			1.484	.16852

As seen in Table 4, the results from the posttest achievement scores indicate that there is a little significant difference between the mean scores of the participants in their performances on the posttest ($t = 1.484, df = 78, \alpha = 0.05, p = 0.142$). Because the p value is more than α , there is little difference between the means of the posttest scores in favor of the experimental group, and the null hypothesis below is rejected:

There is no relationship between storytelling technique and the improvement of students' speaking achievement

However, in addition to the analyses conducted thus far, two matched t test statistical analyses were also conducted to see how much the experimental and control group participants improved in the course of time and after the treatment by being compared with their performance on the pretest.

6.3. Results of English-speaking achievement of Experimental Group

The raw scores from the pretest and the posttest achievement of English-speaking exams were statistically analyzed. A matched t test was conducted to determine the improvement in vocabulary knowledge of the participants after the treatment. This t test was intended to compare the obtained mean scores of the participants of the experimental group on the pre- and posttest. Group statistics and the results of the t test are presented in Tables 5 and 6, respectively:

Table 5 Descriptive data for the experimental group.

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1 Pretest	3.0000	40	1.19829	.18947
Posttest	3.9500	40	.74936	.11848

As illustrated in Table 5, the mean score achieved on the speaking achievement posttest for the experimental group learners (3.95) is much larger than the one obtained on the pretest (3). The mean scores on the pretest and posttest indicate that all participants had made some improvements as the result of the treatments at the end of the study. However, a matched t test was conducted to investigate whether the differences between the mean scores were statistically meaningful.

Table 6 Matched t test for the experimental group.

	Mean	t	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1 posttest pretest	-.95000	-7.104	.084580	.13373
Df: 39		Sig. .000		



As seen in Table 6, the results from the pre/posttest achievement scores indicate that there is a significant difference between the mean scores of the participants in their performances on the test ($t = -7.104$, $df = 39$, $\alpha = 0.05$, $p = 0.00$). Because the p value is less than α , there is a significant difference between the means of the pre- and posttest scores, indicating a meaningful improvement on the part of the experimental group subjects, and the null hypothesis below is therefore rejected:

There is no relationship between storytelling technique and the English-speaking achievement of students at the A2 level.

6.4. Results of English-speaking achievement of the control group

Similar to the previous data analysis for the experimental group, the results from the pre- and posttest exams were statistically analyzed. A matched t test was run to investigate the English-speaking achievement results of the participants on the pre- and posttests. This t test was meant to compare the obtained mean scores of the participants in the control group. Group statistics and the results of the matched t test are presented in Tables 7 and 8, respectively:

Table 7 Descriptive data for the control group.

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	pretest	3.2000	40	1.04268	.16486
	posttest	3.7000	40	.75786	.11983

As demonstrated in Table 8, the mean score obtained on the vocabulary posttest for the control group learners (3.7) is higher than that obtained on the pretest (3.2). The mean scores on the pre- and posttests for the control group indicate that all participants had made some improvements after the study, but the improvement was not as large as that made by the experimental group learners. However, a matched t test was performed to establish whether the differences between the mean scores were significant.

Table 8 Matched t test for the experimental group.

		Mean	t	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	posttest				
	pretest	-.5000	-3.732	.084732	.13397
		Df: 39	Sig. .001		

As shown in Table 8, the results from the pre- and posttest scores demonstrate that there is a significant difference between the means of the performances of the control group learners on pre- and posttests ($t = -3.732$, $df = 39$, $\alpha = 0.05$ and $p = 0.01$). Because the value is less than α , there is a significant difference between the means of the pretest scores.

Although a significant improvement for the control group was recorded, this group was outperformed by the performance of the experimental group, which had enjoyed storytelling as their teaching technique; hence, the null hypothesis below is rejected:

There is no relationship between storytelling technique and the English-speaking achievement of students at the A2 level.

6.5. Results of Improvement of Interest Rate Boost Among Experimental Group Learners

Table 9 Results of Improvement of Interest Rate Boost Among Experimental Group Learners.

	Statement	Mean (x)	Interpretation	Rank
1.	I enjoy participating in this course.	4.59	Strongly agree	1
2.	I like to practice speaking English	4.45	Agree	2
3.	I want to study English more and more.	4.45	Agree	2
4.	I feel comfortable expressing my ideas in English after joining this course.	4.41	Agree	3
5.	I can freely speak up when I study in this class.	4.41	Agree	3
6.	I like to speak and discuss with my friends	4.41	Agree	3
7.	I feel more confident speaking English after joining this course	4.36	Agree	4
8.	My speaking skill has been improved	4.36	Agree	4
9.	Learning to speak English in this class makes me speak English easier than in the past	4.23	Agree	5
10.	I can correct my pronunciation myself, so I feel more relaxed and comfortable while speaking	4.23	Agree	5



11. Studying English in this class help me to create my idea.	4.14	Agree	6
12. Studying English in this class gives me more opportunities to work in a team, so I can receive support from other friends	4.14	Agree	6
13. I have more confidence to speak English with native speakers.	4.14	Agree	6
14. I learn vocabulary faster than I did in the past	4.00	Agree	7
15. I actively look up new words before going to class.	4.00	Agree	7
16. I often read the given material at home	4.00	Agree	7
17. I don't feel shy when I make mistakes	4.00	Agree	7
18. I want to learn more English	4.00	Agree	7
19. Joining this class pushes me to speak more and more.	4.00	Agree	7
20. Joining this class inspires me to study hard to look for other aspects of English	3.23	Neutral	8

From the results of a questionnaire to examine learners' motivation toward studying English through the storytelling technique, it was found that all learners strongly agreed with item 1. Learners agreed with items 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, and 20. The results of the total of 20 items showed learners' agreement with a statistical rating of $x = 4.00$. It could be concluded that the majority of learners had motivation when studying English speaking through the storytelling technique.

7. Final Considerations and Implications

Storytelling is a technique worth investigating in the context of teaching English-speaking classes. Through the storytelling technique, EFL learners are needed to be able to comprehend the general idea, recognize characters, and summarize what they listen to. This storytelling technique transforms a boring classroom into an engaging environment full of student attentiveness, participation, and productivity. The researcher attempted to investigate the application of the storytelling technique in this study. By evaluating prior empirical studies on the impact of storytelling on the learning and teaching process. As a result, the current study attempted to determine whether storytelling is positively related to achievement in learners' speaking proficiency. Therefore, the following were the research questions of this study:

Question 1: To what extent can storytelling affect A2-level learners' achievement in English speaking skills?

Question 2: To what extent can storytelling affect A2-level learners' motivation in English speaking skills?

To answer the first question, the researchers analyzed the data taken from the participants, including one experimental and one control group. The participants were selected from young A2 learners who were between the age range of 8 and 14. The participants watched stories and then were taught the key vocabulary of some stories via pictures and gestures. They were needed to use vocabulary and structures learned from the story to discuss questions related to the story. Afterward, their achievement was put to the test as the pretest and the posttest. Therefore, the objective of the research was to gain better insight into finding the achievement of EFL learners via the storytelling technique to teach new embedded reading texts.

Hence, the presence of the storytelling technique helped improve the speaking skills of the experimental group participants more compared to the control group participants because they had developed a steadier and more dynamic interaction with the stories and new words to derive the intended message. At this age, young EFL learners are assumed to have the capability of picking up new words unconsciously as a byproduct of doing something else, in this case, listening to a story (Krashen, 2011). This attractive process of listening to a storyline and comprehending the idea of the story is what keeps young EFL learners focused and, therefore, superior to those who have to learn to speak via traditional methods of learning.

Based on the analysis of the data from the achievement posttest, it was revealed that the use of children's stories to develop speaking skills among the experimental group participants was effective and was perceived positively by them. To some extent, this result reflects the effectiveness of storytelling in developing EFL students' speaking skills, which is claimed to be the most important element in EFL learning.

The above finding is consistent with an earlier study conducted by Maguire (1985), who reported that the storytelling technique had a positive effect on vocabulary learning and recalling the visual context of using vocabulary, which is helpful for producing oral output. It is clear that the storytelling technique fosters natural communication in the English language classroom by allowing EFL students to experience and experiment with the authentic use of the English language, a basic concept that communicative language teaching emphasizes. With storytelling, students are surrounded by the English language in the classroom, which makes it easy to learn new words. Moreover, another justification for the superiority of the storytelling approach may be attributed to the fact that EFL students were given the opportunity to listen to stories orally and via visual support (i.e., PowerPoint), which gave them the advantage of developing a deeper understanding of the words.

To address question #2, the researchers collected participants' viewpoints via questionnaires regarding motivation, and the experimental group participants demonstrated a remarkably meaningful improvement in terms of their interest rate.



In the analysis of the data, it was revealed that almost all of the participants had recorded a boost in their interest rates except for three of them.

A possible explanation for the results achieved above can be the fact that the three participants who did not show an increase were already motivated and interested enough to learn EFL. However, the remaining EFL participants who had an average interest rate documented a jump in their motivation via a storytelling approach to teaching EFL. The results are in concord with Brown (2007), who points out that, as we look for ways to bring communicative teaching into our English language classrooms, we must remember the goals that true education is not simply learning specific knowledge but rather occurs when EFL students' learning ability is developed. EFL students should be provided with a set of tools for thinking and creating. Therefore, EFL teachers should take advantage of a storytelling technique and use storytelling to develop our students' competence to think clearly and creatively and express their understanding in diverse ways.

Storytelling also promoted learning in a more natural, meaningful, and interactive context, motivating students to connect with their learning and creating the opportunity for them to use English in the classroom to express themselves appropriately according to the situation. Above all, storytelling boosts EFL students' curiosity to face challenges and brings their inner imaginative and creativity to the forefront (González, 2010). The outcomes of the study also support the assertions of Haven (2000) that storytelling motivates EFL students to be active learners because they are engaged in meaningful activity in class. However, the study does not claim that storytelling is the only teaching strategy that enhances potential speaking skills, nor does it claim to have found the single solution to changing the current dearth of an effective teaching method in English classes.

Acknowledgment

To complete this article, we would like to thank the Rector of the VNUHCM-University of Social Sciences and Humanities, the President of the University of Khanh Hoa, for facilitating our research.

Ethical Considerations

The study complies with ethical principles, including informed consent and data confidentiality. The anonymity and confidentiality of all study participants is maintained.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Funding

The current review did not receive any financial support.

References

- Ababio, B. (2013). Motivation and Classroom Teaching in Geography. *International Journal for Innovation Education and Research*, 1, 26-36. 10.31686/ijer.vol1.iss3.112.
- Al-Tamimi N. (2014). Effectiveness of cooperative learning in enhancing speaking skills and attitudes toward learning English. *International Journal of Linguistics*, 6(4):27-45.
- Blyth, C., & Aslanian, T. K. (Eds.). (2022). *Children and the power of stories: Posthuman and autoethnographic perspectives in early childhood education*. Springer Nature.
- Brown, H. D. (2007). *Teaching by principles: An interactive approach to language pedagogy*. New York: Addison Wesley Longman, Inc.
- Cruzado-Guerrero, J. R., & Martínez-Alba, G. (2022). Supporting elementary-age ELs with limited or interrupted formal education: Literacy events for families using wordless books. In *English and students with limited or interrupted formal education: Global perspectives on teacher preparation and classroom practices* (pp. 227-239). Cham: Springer International Publishing. Doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-86963-2_13
- Curtain, H., & Dahlberg, C. A. (2004). *Languages and children: Making the match*. Boston: Pearson Education.
- Demirbilek, M., Talan, T., & Alzouebi, K. (2022). An Examination of the Factors and Challenges to Adopting Gamification in English Foreign Language Teaching. *International Journal of Technology in Education*, 5(4), 654-668.
- Dung, V. V., Hoa, L. M., & Quyet, L. V. (2023). The Contribution of Ho Chi Minh in Building the Ideas of Vietnamese Today, Students. *Journal of Educational and Social Research*, 13(1), 175. <https://doi.org/10.36941/jesr-2023-0016>
- Gonzalez, N. I. P. (2010). Teaching English through stories: A meaningful and fun way for children to learn the language. *Profile Issues in Teachers' Professional Development*, 12(1) 95-106.
- Goodrich, J. M., Fitton, L., Chan, J., & Davis, C. J. (2023). Assessing oral language when screening multilingual children for learning disabilities in reading. *Intervention in School and Clinic*, 58(3), 164-172. Doi.org/10.1177/10534512221081264
- Handayani, Heny. (2010). *Storytelling Can Improve Speaking Ability for Beginners*. Unpublished Thesis. Bogor: University of IBN Khaldun.
- Harper, A., & Kayumova, S. (2023). Invisible multilingual Black and Brown girls: Raciolinguistic narratives of identity in science education. *Journal of Research in Science Teaching*, 60(5), 1092-1124. Doi.org/10.1002/tea.21826
- Haven, K. F. (2000). *Super simple storytelling: A can-do guide for every classroom, every day*. Englewood, Colo: Teacher Ideas Press.

- Isbell, R., Sobol, J., Lindauer, L., & Lowrance, A. (2004). The effects of storytelling and story reading on the oral language complexity and story comprehension of young children. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 32(3), 157-163.
- Johnson, D. W., Maruyama, G., Johnson, R., Nelson, D., & Skon, L. (1981). Effects of cooperative, competitive, and individualistic goal structures on achievement: A meta-analysis. *Psychological Bulletin*, 89(1), 47-62. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.89.1.47>
- Kim, M. (2010). The effects of storytelling on adult English language learners. *Linguistic Research*, 27(3), 447-473
- Krashen, S. (2011). The Goodman-Smith hypothesis, the input hypothesis, the comprehension hypothesis and the (even stronger) case for free voluntary reading. In P. Anders (Ed.), *Defying convention, inventing the future in literacy research and practice: Essays in tribute to Ken and Yetta Goodman* (pp. 56-99). New York: Routledge.
- Krashen, S. (2011). The Goodman-Smith hypothesis, the input hypothesis, the comprehension hypothesis and the (even stronger) case for free voluntary reading. In P. Anders (Ed.), *Defying convention, inventing the future in literacy research and practice: Essays in tribute to Ken and Yetta Goodman* (pp. 56-99). New York: Routledge.
- Maguire, J. (1985). *Creative storytelling: Choosing, inventing, and sharing tales for children*. New York: The Phillip Lief Group, Inc.
- Nunan, D. (2005). *Practical English Language Teaching: Speaking*. Singapore: McGraw Hill.
- Ohler, J.B.(2013) *Digital Storytelling in the Classroom: New Media Pathways to Literacy, Learning, and Creativity*. New York: Corwin Press.
- Sandgren, O., Andersson, K., Lyberg Åhlander, V., Rosqvist, I., Hansson, K., & Sahlén, B. (2023). A randomized controlled trial of the effectiveness of teacher continued professional development on student language outcomes. *International Journal of Language & Communication Disorders*, 58(3), 879-891. [Doi.org/10.1111/1460-6984.12829](https://doi.org/10.1111/1460-6984.12829)
- Schunk, Dale. H. (2012). *Learning Theories: An Educational Perspective*, 6th Edition. New York: Pearson Education Inc.
- Ståhl, A., Balaam, M., Comber, R., Sanches, P., & Höök, K. (2022, April). Making New Worlds—Transformative Becomings with Soma Design. In *Proceedings of the 2022 CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems* (pp. 1-17). [Doi.org/10.1145/3491102.3502018](https://doi.org/10.1145/3491102.3502018)
- Sutrisno, S., & Nasucha, J. A. (2022). Islamic Religious Education Project-Based Learning Model to Improve Student Creativity. *At-Tadzkir: Islamic Education Journal*, 1(1), 13-22. [Doi.org/10.59373/attadzkir.v1i1.3](https://doi.org/10.59373/attadzkir.v1i1.3)
- Khaled, D. Y. A. (2020). English as a killer language: South Africa as a Case Study. *International Journal of Linguistics, Literature and Translation*, 3(3), 72-79.
- Zhang, J., Cunningham, T., Iyer, R., Baker, R., & Fouh, E. (2022, February). Exploring the Impact of Voluntary Practice and Procrastination in an Introductory Programming Course. In *Proceedings of the 53rd ACM Technical Symposium on Computer Science Education-Volume 1* (pp. 356-361). doi.org/10.1145/3478431.3499350
- Purnell, M. C., & Hughes, J. (2023). Practicing Cultural Humility by Using Actionable Steps for Improving Name Pronunciation and Use. *American Journal of Pharmaceutical Education*, 100043. [Doi.org/10.1016/j.ajpe.2022.09.005](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ajpe.2022.09.005)
- Tavakkalova, T. (2023). Types of culture shock. *Наука и инновация*, 1(10), 101-103.