

# EFL Students' Perceptions on the Use of Storytelling towards English Speaking Proficiency

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## EFL Students' Perceptions on the Use of Storytelling towards English Speaking Proficiency

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### Abstract

In this modern era, where everything is entirely technological, storytelling can still be found everywhere, not only in children's reading books or school books but also on the internet, for learning media. In Indonesia itself, there are a plethora of storytellings. Storytelling as a medium for teaching speaking is also expected to improve EFL students' language skills. Using storytelling as a method to teach speaking is also one of the ways that teaching speaking activity becomes enjoyable. In this study, the research aims to know EFL students' perception of storytelling and their proficiency in English speaking skills using storytelling. This research is conducted using a quantitative method. The data are collected by questionnaire to determine their understanding of storytelling and test; the scoring method employs a speech to text application; we grade three aspects: pronunciation, fluency, and accuracy. The sample of this research is UTY English education EFL students in 2020 and 2021. This research shows that using storytelling can improve EFL students speaking skills. Storytelling to teach speaking to EFL students is hoped that EFL students will be able to hone their speaking skills consciously and use storytelling strategies. In this study, it is known that storytelling is possible to teach speaking skills in the classroom.

**Keywords:** *EFL students, perception, storytelling, English speaking proficiency*

### Introduction

The mastery of speaking skills in English is a priority for many second language learners (Broad & Columbia, 2020), and the effectiveness of their English course is based on how much they have improved in their spoken language proficiency. Speaking in English is very important; of the 4 English skills speaking is the most crucial skill. It is one of our media to express what is in our minds and communicate with each other. Communication happens when the listener can

give the response to the speaker after (Seraj et al., 2021) the listener understands the message given. Speaking is one of four skills that are very important to EFL students because it allows them to understand what others say, what they mean, and how they feel. EFL students can communicate and interact with others by speaking. EFL students can express their feelings, ideas, and opinions. Oral communication can occur anywhere and has become a part of our daily activities as our spoken language (Megawati, 2018). Dealing

with the expectation of the objective in speaking skills is not straightforward for either teachers or EFL students. They face some challenges in the teaching and learning of speaking. The researcher discovered some issues based on her experience and observations in classroom activities. First, EFL students were afraid and nervous when they wanted to speak or communicate in English with their classmates. Second, unless she asked them questions, the EFL students had no idea or initiative to speak, and when they did have ideas, they did not know how to express them. It was due to a lack of vocabulary, a lack of understanding of grammatical patterns, and a poor understanding of speaking English (Bashori et al., 2020)

As we know, Indonesia is a tourist country, and for that, we need to be able to communicate well to present what we have. In light of the importance of the skill of speaking, the national curriculum has mandated that it be taught and practiced during the teaching and learning process. According to the national curriculum, English is one of the most important subjects to be taught in schools, beginning from playgroup, kindergarten, elementary school, junior high school, senior high school, and university. Even though the National Curriculum requires EFL students to learn English, implementing this skill of teaching and learning at schools remains a challenge. Many EFL students continue to have limited proficiency in using English both in and out of the classroom. Several factors cause this issue. There are both external and internal factors to consider. External factors are mostly related to teachers' proficiency in managing the teaching-learning process, such as teaching strategy, class management, material mastery, evaluation, and media. The EFL students themselves generate internal factors. Most EFL students are afraid of making mistakes, are too shy to speak, or do not want to speak. Ancillary (Fikriah, 2016) storytelling entails more than simply telling stories. It may include not only the creation of a story but also the use of pictures, acting, singing, story writing, and other similar activities.

The National Council of Teachers of English defines storytelling as the telling of a story to one or more listeners through voice and gesture, emphasizing that it is not the same as simply acting out a drama or reciting a story from memory or a text but rather the creation of mental images of the elements of a story to an audience through voice and gestures (Arroba & Acosta, 2021; James et al., 2019; Nair & Yunus, 2021). According to Doğan & Çifci (2021), storytelling is a knowledge management technique that distributes information to audiences with a sense of information. Arroba & Acosta (2021) states that storytelling can be a convenient tool for practicing listening skills and verbal expression. Storytelling as a teaching media has been used for a long time; in all levels of education, teachers can choose which stories might be interesting to use as learning media to be taught to their EFL students (fantasy, comedy, tragedy, real-life stories, mythology, etc., to find out EFL students' proficiency in speaking using storytelling as media). (Mu'tashim & Syafii, 2018) Storytelling is an important tool for changing EFL students' motivation. Even EFL students with low motivation and academic skills prefer to listen to stories. As a result, the teacher can educate them on the importance of the story. Unfortunately, many teachers believe that storytelling takes time.

However, this is not the case. Storytelling is also a component of education. Suppose the teacher begins by telling a precious story. EFL students will remember this for a long time. It is also a benefit of storytelling because it allows EFL students to summarize a story easily, encourages creative thinking and allows EFL students to express ideas in the format of beginning, development, and ending, which includes the characters and setting that a story must have (Nair & Yunus, 2021). Storytelling is rich material for EFL students because storytelling is an interesting and unique way for students to learn about the world around them. Not only that, but storytelling can also develop their understanding and respect for other cultures. When EFL students learn about storytelling,

they picture the characters, the setting, and the storyline. Storytelling can encourage EFL students to imagine what the story looks like in their minds and enhance their creativity to get new ideas.

Technology innovation provides a specialized technique to boost EFL students' speaking skills. The researcher believes that it is necessary to discover an alternative method for developing a suitable and exciting technique based on the EFL students' circumstances. As a result, the researcher proposes one technique, storytelling, to assist EFL students in improving their speaking skills. Storytelling is very important in teaching speaking because it allows EFL students to practice speaking skills. Storytelling has also become a method for encouraging English language learners to participate in learning a foreign language actively. Storytelling can inspire EFL students to speak up about everyday life events. This study will address the impact of storytelling on speaking proficiency. Storytelling is selected because it provides pupils with a variety of experiences. It incorporates audio and educational information and unique delivery methods, expression, and emotion. Storytelling can be a fun method to improve your English skills and boost confidence (Rahiem, 2021).

This study aims to discover EFL students' perception of storytelling and EFL students' speaking proficiency through storytelling. First, The researchers want to know about their perception of storytelling and whether they are familiar with it. (Persky et al., 2020) state that perception is how organisms interpret and organize sensation to produce a meaningful world experience. Second, through storytelling, the researchers want to know how far their speaking proficiency (Khoiriyah et al., 2019) is. This study is expected to provide information for policymaking in the reality of English teaching. Besides that, it contributes to English teachers by measuring EFL students' response to English as a medium of instruction in teaching English; hopefully, English teachers will develop their ways to teach a good variety of things in this type of situation in the future (Rahmadani, 2016).

## Method

The method used in this research focused on knowing speaking proficiency using storytelling. The sample of this research is UTY English education student 2021. To collect data, the instruments to be used are tests and questionnaires. EFL students will be given a dialog of the short story and asked to speak it and record it on the test instruments. Then, they will answer some questions that the researchers have made through a google form. In the questionnaire, researchers prepare the questions that have been selected to be asked. The questions are related to the teaching process using storytelling and the advantage. After the researcher prepared the questions after sending the record, we will grade it using the speech to text application and see if there is a missing word; we asked the EFL students to speak and record the storytelling text we gave. After they send the records, we will grade them using speech to text application and see if there is a missing word. We consider some aspects of assessment: fluency, accuracy, and pronunciation. After the data collected from student recordings and speech to text, most of them have good speaking skills; there are only a few wrong pronunciations, so the word is missing / not detected by the speech to text application.

After completing the interview phase and all the questions answered, the researchers analyzed facts earlier than writing them in Finding. To examine the facts, the researchers used three steps of facts analysis. (Tobi & Kampen, 2018) state facts analysis which includes three hobbies: facts discount, the facts show, and end drawing/verification, those described as follows:

**Data Reduction**

Data Reduction is the subsequent step after the facts series changed into accrued; it approaches the method of diagnosing and choosing the facts cautiously and focusing on simplification to summarize all the acquired facts if there are a few facts which now no longer blanketed in a

35). The scoring rubric for the speaking aspects is presented in the table below (Zuhriyah, 2017).

**Table 1 Rubric for Speaking**

$$\text{Total score} = \frac{\text{student score}}{\text{maximum}(8)} \times 100$$

Aspect	Score			
	4	3	2	1
<b>Pronunciation</b>	Pronunciation is excellent	Pronunciation is good	Pronunciation is good but needs some efforts	Pronunciation is lacking and difficult to understand
<b>Fluency</b>	The fluency is smooth, and no hesitation	The fluency is smooth, and few hesitations	The fluency is relatively smooth, and some hesitation	The fluency is slow and hesitant
<b>Accuracy</b>	All the words are detected by speech to text application	Less than ten words are missing	Missing more than 15 words	Missing more than 30 words

**Findings and Discussion**

A

few elements. Gaus (2017) states that facts discount is the hobby of choosing, focusing, facilitating, abstracting, and converting the facts that have been written in subject notes or transcriptions.

**Data Display**

The subsequent step is facts show; facts show is a hobby while a fixed of facts or records arranged, so it could give the opportunity of creating an end, with inside the facts show, the researcher offered facts that have been accrued and decreased earlier than. The facts show is a resource to the researcher to apprehend what goes on and to do something-both it has far examined or take movement degree primarily based totally on the understanding (Tobi & Kampen, 2018).

**End Drawing and Verification**

The final step is end drawing and verification; In the end drawing and verification approach, the researcher makes a very last end and verification from the result of the facts that have been collected. The scoring rubric for speaking skills used in this study was adapted from Maulany's speaking rubric (2013:

a questionnaire about their perception related to the use of storytelling in teaching speaking, our team did data analysis and wrote down the findings. First, the question that we asked the respondents, "do you know about storytelling? The." result of the questionnaire showed that 28 respondents answered they agreed (68,3%), and 13 respondents strongly agreed (31,7). It meant that they had already known and been familiar with storytelling. The second item was distributed to know about their experiences in their school lesson about storytelling. The questionnaire result showed that 26 respondents (63,4%) agreed, 11 respondents (26,8%) answered strongly agree, and three respondents, 9,8%, disagreed. Most of them had gotten storytelling since school, but some respondents had not gotten storytelling material during their school.

The third item was given to know if they are engaging in storytelling. Thirty-four respondents answered they agree (82,9%), and there were four respondents (9,8%) who answered strongly agree. It seems that they are very enthusiastic about storytelling, and there are three respondents (7,3%) who answered disagree, showing that they are not interested

in storytelling material. The fourth item was given to know about their perception that storytelling can improve their English skills. The result showed that 32 respondents responded they agreed (78%), and there were nine respondents (22%) who responded strongly agreed. We can conclude that most of their perception agree that storytelling was giving an impact on their English skills; it is in line with the research conducted by Bhakti, 2020; Dalim et al., 2019; Nyagadza et al., 2020; et al., 2020; Yocom et al., 2020.

Item number five asks whether storytelling motivates the informant to improve their English skills; 73.2% agree that storytelling helps them improve their English skill, 19.5% strongly agree, and 7.3% disagree. It can be concluded that storytelling helps motivate EFL students to improve their English skills; only a few respondents believe it cannot. The sixth one asked the respondent's opinion about whether storytelling is important to be taught as learning material or not; the result is 97.6% answered strongly agree, where almost all respondents answered that storytelling is an important material to be taught as a means of teaching in the classroom.

The next item asked the respondents about how important is the role of storytelling

in their learning process; we gave respondents the option to fill in on a scale of 1-5, most of them answered 3 and 4 out of a scale of 5, which concluded that storytelling is an important part in the learning process of the respondents. From the questionnaire result, we can conclude that most EFL students in English education at UTY have been familiar with storytelling because of their experience in their previous schools. Although they have been taught about storytelling material, it turns out that some EFL students are not interested in using storytelling as a medium to improve their English skills (Chen Hsieh & Lee, 2021; Esposito Santore, 2019; James et al., 2019) but most of them believe that storytelling has an impact role in improving their English proficiency; the questionnaire also showed that storytelling has an important role because storytelling gave motivation to them. (Choo et al., 2020) state that stories that rely so much on words offer major and consonant sources of language experience for children. Moreover, stories can motivate children, stimulate children's imagination, arouse children's interests, etc., but some EFL students disagree; they feel that storytelling does not motivate them.

No	Respondents	Accuracy	Fluency	Pronunciation	Score	Total Score
1	R#1	3	4	3	10	83,3
2	R#2	3	3	3	9	75
3	R#3	3	3	3	9	75
4	R#4	3	4	3	10	83,3
5	R#5	4	3	3	10	83,3
6	R#6	3	3	3	9	75
7	R#7	3	3	3	9	75
8	R#8	2	3	2	7	58,3
9	R#9	4	4	3	11	91,6
10	R#10	3	4	3	10	83,3
11	R#11	4	4	3	11	91,6
12	R#12	4	4	3	11	91,6
13	R#13	3	3	3	9	75
14	R#14	3	2	2	7	58,3
15	R#15	3	4	3	10	83,3

**Table 2 EFL Students' Proficiency in Speaking English**

The speaking test was conducted on fifteen EFL students in the English education department batch 2020/2021; we used a WhatsApp group to give them instructions on how to test their speaking skills using storytelling. The test is carried out in stages; first, they fill out the questionnaire that has been prepared to find out how much they know about storytelling. Then we do a test to prepare a piece of text/dialogue and give them instructions to record it. Then they can send their recorded file via WhatsApp. We will assess all the recordings using the scoring rubric above when all the recordings have been collected. Rubrics were used to rate them, and the researcher used the speech to texts app to help us assess their work. This test takes about 1 - 2 minutes for each student to record their speaking. The tests show a variety of results towards the test. In the rubric, several aspects are assessed. Several EFL students performed well-using tone and emphasis in several parts from these aspects. There are EFL students who are nervous and then just read, and there is no emphasis on tone. But overall, by using storytelling, they speak fluently based on the score from the scoring rubric, only need improvement in intonation.

Based on the above discovery, the whistleblower used the storytelling technique in language teaching to help EFL students speak. Literacy-based instructional materials and activities benefit student learning because they stimulate the imagination, increase motivation, and provide a meaningful context. Storytelling is defined as the art of telling stories through words and actions to engage an audience (James et al., 2019). In other words, it is not the same as reading a story because it narrates a story from memory (Sembiring & Ginting, 2019); because of the numerous benefits embedded in stories, storytelling is one of the best ways to help EFL students learn the four skills in their first and second languages. It also improves learners' communication abilities (Utami et al., 2018).

Storytelling is the best way to help EFL students learn a second language like they learned their mother tongue (Khodabandeh, 2018). There are numerous benefits to using the storytelling technique. Storytelling is an excellent strategy for improving EFL students' oral speaking abilities because it directs EFL students' attention to meaning rather than form. Short stories help learners improve their speaking skills and enhance their independent English language learning. The storytelling technique is thought to be one of the most enjoyable ways to develop students' English language skills. Digital storytelling can improve EFL students' speaking skills far more than traditional storytelling (Khodabandeh, 2018). When EFL students are in a bad mood while learning English, or when EFL students' attention has spread, the teacher can use storytelling to create the right conditions. According to an English teacher who was also an informant in this study, storytelling has provided many benefits, including training EFL students' imaginations, developing EFL students' oral skills, and training EFL students to focus on the English language. EFL students will also practice writing their dissertations in English, such as learning how to pronounce words correctly.

### Conclusion

Based on the findings and results above, the researchers can conclude that. Based on the questionnaire, most EFL students already understand storytelling, and they already have experience related to storytelling. They also agree and are happy with storytelling lessons to teach English. Storytelling is useful to improve their speaking skills. They are interested in applying it in class to become a variation in learning English, especially in speaking; they liked the storytelling technique for learning to speak English. Some EFL students said they enjoyed their class when the technique was used, though some EFL students found it difficult to do storytelling at first because they thought it would be difficult to memorize all sentences.

Nonetheless, they enjoyed the difficult activities. Second, based on the test we carried out and the test result, most EFL students speak well and fluently; they know how to adjust their tone and intonation. But they should increase their speaking proficiency to get better. One of the most important influences on language learning success or failure is the learner's effective side. Various effective variables have been confirmed related to second language acquisition success in research over the last decade. Still, most of those studies focused on three categories: motivation, self-confidence, and anxiety.

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