



Utilization of the Storytelling Method to Improve Students' Speaking Skills

Siti Nur Aisyah Mappatanga^{1*}, Syarifuddin², Ika Suciwati³

^{1,2,3}English Education Study Program, Sekolah Tinggi Keguruan dan Ilmu Pendidikan Taman Siswa Bima, Indonesia

Corresponding Author:

Author Name*: Siti Nur Aisyah Mappatanga

Email*: sitinuraisyahmt@gmail.com

Accepted: June 20th 2025. Approved: September 3th 2025. Published: September 11th 2025

ABSTRACT

Speaking skills are one of the important aspects in learning English as a foreign language; however, in reality, it still becomes a challenge for junior high school students, including at SMPN 1 Sape. Based on the initial observation, students showed fear, lack of self-confidence, as well as limitations in vocabulary and sentence structure when speaking in English. This study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of the storytelling method in improving the English speaking skills of seventh-grade students at SMPN 1 Sape. The research method used was Classroom Action Research (CAR), utilizing a mixed-methods approach that combines quantitative and qualitative approaches. The reflective spiral model of Kemmis and McTaggart was applied in two cycles, each consisting of two meetings. Quantitative data were collected through pretest and posttest, while qualitative data were obtained through observation, questionnaires, documentation, and field notes. The results of the study showed that the students' average score increased from 56.41 in the pretest to 78.54 in the posttest of Cycle II, with an N-Gain score of 0.51 (medium category). In addition, students' active participation and self-confidence in speaking also experienced a significant improvement. Storytelling-based learning with a local cultural context has been proven to enhance students' speaking skills both communicatively and contextually. In conclusion, the storytelling method is an effective learning strategy for improving junior high school students' English speaking skills and promoting meaningful and enjoyable learning experiences.

Keywords: storytelling, speaking skills, speaking technique

INTRODUCTION

English has become an international language taught at almost all levels of education worldwide. Awareness of the importance of mastering a foreign language, particularly English, lies in its ability to be used in communication, both oral and written. As an international language, English serves as an important medium in global communication [1]. The Indonesian national education policy also emphasizes the importance of mastering English, as stated in the Government Regulation of the Republic of Indonesia No. 32 of 2013, which designates English as the primary foreign language taught in schools and as one of the subjects tested in the national examination [2].

The development of the educational world currently demands innovation in the learning process, including the teaching of English as a foreign language. Learning is no longer solely centered on the teacher (teacher-centered), but has shifted to a model that emphasizes the active involvement of learners in constructing their own knowledge (student-centered). Therefore, approaches are needed that can comprehensively facilitate students' learning needs, including the development of speaking skills. One approach that has increasingly been applied and studied for its effectiveness is the storytelling method, which

can integrate cognitive, affective, and psychomotor elements simultaneously in the learning process [3].

Storytelling as a learning method offers various advantages that are relevant to the characteristics of students at the junior high school level [4]. Students at this age tend to be more easily attracted to activities that are creative, imaginative, and enjoyable. Storytelling activities provide space for them to express themselves, develop narratives, and use English in meaningful and authentic contexts. In addition, the use of digital media in storytelling, such as animation applications or interactive videos, can be an effective means of fostering students' interest, motivation, and participation in learning. This is in line with the rapid development of educational technology, which opens new opportunities for teachers to develop learning strategies that are more innovative and adaptive [5].

Furthermore, storytelling also plays a crucial role in developing twenty-first-century skills, including critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication. Through the activities of composing and delivering stories, students are trained to organize ideas logically, select appropriate vocabulary, and convey messages clearly and engagingly. Interaction in storytelling activities, both individually and in groups, also contributes to the creation of a collaborative and supportive learning environment [6]. Therefore, the

integration of the storytelling method in English learning at junior high schools not only functions as a means to improve speaking skills, but also as an effort to create learning that is more relevant to the needs of today's students and the global challenges of the future [7].

In the context of learning English as a foreign language (EFL), speaking skills become one of the main competencies that need to be developed to achieve effective communication. However, the development of speaking skills in junior high schools in Indonesia still faces various complex challenges. Limited exposure to English in daily life causes students to feel afraid, nervous, and lacking in self-confidence when they have to speak in public or in simple interactions. Traditional teaching methods that place less emphasis on oral communication aspects also become an obstacle to improving students' speaking skills. To overcome these barriers, innovative approaches such as the English Conversation Club program have been implemented and proven effective in enhancing junior high school students' speaking skills by creating a supportive and interactive learning environment [8].

The novelty of this research lies in the integration of the storytelling method with local Bima culture as teaching material in English learning at the junior high school level. Local folktales were used not only to introduce cultural values to students but also to create an emotional bond between students and the material, thus making it easier for them to understand and retell the stories orally. This strategy has not been extensively studied in the literature on EFL learning at the junior high school level with a local culture-based approach.

In addition, this study presents novelty in the application of the reflective spiral model by Kemmis and McTaggart, which was implemented in two cycles of action and combined with a systematic mixed-methods evaluation approach (quantitative and qualitative). This study not only relied on descriptive observation, but also calculated effectiveness using the N-Gain formula and analyzed the level of learning mastery based on the percentage of students' achievement. With this approach, the study provides a comprehensive description of the effectiveness of storytelling in improving students' speaking skills, both in terms of the final outcomes and the process of student engagement in learning.

The research conducted by Kristiansi revealed that the implementation of the storytelling method in EFL classrooms can increase learning motivation, build self-confidence, and enrich students' language experiences through creative and meaningful activities [9]. Another study also showed that storytelling encourages students to think more critically, organize ideas coherently, and communicate their thoughts more expressively, which ultimately contributes significantly to the improvement of speaking fluency.

The storytelling method can be an effective pedagogical approach to improve students' speaking skills. Storytelling creates a more interactive and enjoyable learning environment, encouraging students

to use English in real-life situations actively. Through this technique, students are trained not only to speak more fluently but also to develop ideas in a coherent, logical, and expressive manner [10]. The research conducted by Murad and Assadi showed that the implementation of digital storytelling significantly improved speaking fluency, vocabulary, and built students' self-confidence in delivering ideas in public. In addition, Nair and Md Yunus found that the use of digital storytelling applications such as Toontastic 3D can enhance students' engagement, motivation, and self-confidence in speaking English [11]. Thus, storytelling is not only effective in improving speaking skills, but also contributes to creating a communicative, supportive, and enjoyable learning environment, which is very important in English as a foreign language learning at the junior high school level [12].

Furthermore, the implementation of the storytelling method, which highlights local folktales, not only provides a more meaningful learning experience but also plays a crucial role in building students' cultural connections and national identity. Folktales, as part of local cultural heritage, contain moral values, ethics, and life philosophies that students in the learning process can internalize. This is in line with the objectives of the Merdeka Curriculum, which emphasizes the importance of strengthening character education through the integration of local wisdom values into learning. Thus, storytelling not only functions as a medium to improve students' linguistic competence in speaking English, but also as a vehicle for character formation and cultural awareness [13]. Furthermore, the process of orally retelling stories indirectly trains critical thinking skills, the ability to construct narrative structures, as well as the courage to express ideas in front of others.

Nevertheless, the effectiveness of implementing storytelling in English classes cannot be separated from various challenges faced at the implementation level. Some of the main obstacles include limited resources for learning media, a lack of teacher training in effective storytelling techniques, and an unbalanced student-teacher ratio in large classes, which limits opportunities for students to speak and receive direct feedback. In many schools, teachers often lack the necessary pedagogical skills to develop storytelling as an active and contextual method effectively. Therefore, the long-term solution that needs to be considered is the improvement of teacher capacity through professional training based on hands-on practice and the utilization of educational technology, such as digital storytelling, which allows learning experiences to be more engaging, personal, and flexibly accessible [14]. With the support of school policies and learning innovations, storytelling can be developed into a sustainable approach that is relevant to the dynamics of twenty-first-century learning.

Considering the urgency of these problems, this study is crucial to conduct, particularly to explore and prove the effectiveness of the storytelling method in enhancing students' speaking skills in English as a foreign language at SMP Negeri 1 Sape.

This study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of the storytelling method in improving students' speaking skills in English learning at the junior high school level. The primary focus of this study is to determine the extent to which the storytelling method can improve students' skills to express ideas orally, which includes aspects of speaking fluency, vocabulary mastery, pronunciation, and grammar within a communicative context. In addition, this study also aims to observe students' active participation and emotional engagement during the learning process, particularly in terms of enhancing self-confidence and motivation to speak in front of the class.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study used a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative methods in the form of Classroom Action Research (CAR). This approach was chosen to provide a more comprehensive description of the improvement of students' speaking skills through the storytelling strategy. The qualitative approach was used to explore students' responses, learning activities, and obstacles encountered during the learning process, while the quantitative approach was used to analyze the improvement in students' learning outcomes through test data collected at each cycle.

Classroom Action Research (CAR) with a mixed-method approach, which integrates quantitative and qualitative data to provide a comprehensive description of the effectiveness of storytelling in improving students' speaking skills. The cyclical model of Kemmis and McTaggart, which includes the stages of planning, implementation, observation, and reflection, served as the main framework in designing and evaluating the learning intervention over two cycles, each consisting of two meetings [15].

In preparing the research instruments, the researcher designed a speaking test that was analytically developed to evaluate five main aspects of students' oral skills, namely pronunciation, fluency, grammar, vocabulary, and verbal expression. This instrument was designed with reference to the speaking assessment standards of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), which were adapted to the junior high school context. Each aspect was assessed using a scoring rubric of 1–5 to ensure the objectivity of the assessment and the comparability between cycles. This test was administered before (pretest) and after (posttest) the

action in each cycle to measure the development of speaking skills quantitatively.

To support contextual understanding, qualitative data were collected through participatory observation sheets, student perception questionnaires, learning documentation, including photos and audio-visual recordings, and field notes that recorded students' spontaneous responses during the storytelling process. The questionnaire was designed to combine closed-ended and open-ended questions, exploring students' perceptions of comfort, motivation, and obstacles encountered during storytelling-based learning. These instruments were not only intended to collect data objectively, but also to provide space for the exploration of students' meanings, emotions, and learning experiences comprehensively [16].

Qualitative data analysis was carried out using the interactive model of Miles and Huberman, which consists of three systematic stages: data reduction, namely the process of selecting, simplifying, and focusing on relevant data; data display in the form of descriptive narratives, summary tables, and direct quotations from students and teachers; and conclusion drawing and verification, which were conducted continuously during the research process to ensure the credibility and validity of the findings. Source triangulation was conducted by comparing data from test results, observations, and questionnaires to strengthen the validity of the interpretation.

Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistical techniques, namely by calculating the mean score of the pretest and posttest, as well as the percentage of learning mastery based on the predetermined Minimum Mastery Criterion (MMC), which was 70. The formula used to calculate mastery is:

$$P = \frac{F}{N} \times 100\%$$

Description:

P : Percentage of students achieving the MMC

F : Number of students achieving the MMC

N : Total number of students

Meanwhile, to determine the effectiveness of the intervention, the gain score (N-Gain) analysis was used with the formula:

$$\text{Gain} = \frac{\text{Posttest} - \text{Pretest}}{\text{Maximum Score} - \text{Pretest}}$$

To determine the effectiveness of improving students' speaking skills, the N-Gain Score analysis was used. The interpretation of this gain score refers to the classification developed [17] as shown in the following table:

Table 1. N-Gain Assessment Guidelines

| N-Gain Range | Category | Interpretation |
|------------------|----------|---|
| Gain < 0.3 | Low | The improvement of learning outcomes is still low |
| 0.3 ≤ Gain < 0.7 | Medium | The improvement of learning outcomes is quite effective |
| Gain ≥ 0.7 | High | The improvement of learning outcomes is very effective |

The interpretation of the gain score refers to the classification, namely: < 0.3 (low), 0.3–0.7 (medium), and > 0.7 (high). In this study, the mixed-methods

approach offers advantages in integrating objective quantitative data with narrative and reflective qualitative findings, thereby enabling the description of

changes in both learning outcome achievements and the dynamics of the learning process. This approach has been proven relevant in various previous studies that emphasized the importance of combining numerical and narrative data to obtain a holistic understanding of learning interventions [18].

Furthermore, the percentage of students who achieved the Minimum Mastery Criterion (MMC) was calculated to evaluate the level of learning achievement. This analysis enabled the objective identification of improvements in students' speaking skills. For example, the study conducted by Rohmah and Khofshoh showed a significant increase in students' average scores after the implementation of video-based learning methods [19].

Qualitative data analysis in this study was carried out to gain an in-depth understanding of the learning process, students' responses, and classroom dynamics during the implementation of the storytelling method. Qualitative data were obtained through classroom observations, interviews with teachers and students, as well as documentation of learning activities. Meanwhile, quantitative data were obtained through speaking tests administered before and after the learning intervention. The analysis was conducted using descriptive statistics by calculating the mean, median, and standard deviation to assess the distribution of students' scores.

For qualitative data analysis, this study used the interactive model of Miles and Huberman [20], which consists of three main stages:

1. **Data Reduction** At this stage, the data from the results of observations, interviews, and documentation were selected, summarized, and focused on important aspects relevant to the research objectives, such as students' participation, enthusiasm during storytelling, and forms of verbal interaction during the learning process.
2. **Data Display** The reduced data were then presented in the form of descriptive narratives, interview quotations, or summary tables of student activities so that the researcher could understand the situation comprehensively and make preliminary interpretations.
3. **Conclusion Drawing/Verification** The researcher drew meaning from the organized data and looked for patterns, relationships, and certain tendencies. These conclusions were then continuously verified during the research process to ensure the validity of the data through source triangulation (observation, interviews, and documentation).

Data Triangulation, to enhance the validity and reliability of the findings, data triangulation was carried out by comparing the results from various sources, such as speaking tests, classroom observations, and field notes. This approach ensures that multiple consistent pieces of evidence support the conclusions drawn. For instance, Campbell's study highlighted the importance of classroom observation in action research, emphasizing the need for an in-depth understanding of the learning context.

With the support of data triangulation, this interactive model of Miles and Huberman further enables the systematic processing of qualitative data, producing in-depth, valid, and relevant findings on the effectiveness of implementing the storytelling method in English learning.

Quantitative data in this study were analyzed using descriptive statistics by calculating the mean score and the percentage of achievement toward the Minimum Mastery Criterion (MMC). This approach helped to assess the improvement in students' speaking scores objectively. Previous studies showed that storytelling was effective in improving students' speaking scores in the aspects of vocabulary, pronunciation, and fluency [21].

The results of qualitative analysis obtained through the interactive model of Miles and Huberman, supported by data triangulation (observation, questionnaires, and field notes), showed that storytelling also increased students' motivation and self-confidence in speaking [22]. By combining both types of data, a comprehensive picture of the storytelling method's effectiveness was obtained. This mixed-methods approach aligns with the findings of previous studies, which have shown that digital storytelling enhances speaking skills and improves student engagement in learning. This process aimed to identify patterns of student behavior, levels of participation, and classroom dynamics that occurred during the learning process. Through the integration of these two types of data, it is expected that a comprehensive understanding can be obtained regarding the effectiveness of the storytelling strategy in improving students' speaking skills at SMPN 1 Sape.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The implementation of the storytelling method in English learning was carried out through the Classroom Action Research (CAR) approach. This approach was chosen because of its capability to address learning problems iteratively and reflectively, as well as being adaptive to students' learning needs. The CAR model used referred to the reflective spiral stages of Kemmis and McTaggart, which include: planning, acting, observing, and reflecting.

1. Planning

The results of problem identification in the planning stage revealed that most students experienced low self-confidence and anxiety when speaking English, which was attributed to limitations in vocabulary, sentence structure, and pronunciation. This finding is consistent with Afidawati, who stated that a high level of speaking anxiety can hinder students' oral performance, and strategies such as practice and relaxation before speaking are necessary for improvement to happen [23].

Therefore, the planning of the first cycle was designed to implement the storytelling method, using Bima folktales as teaching materials. In addition to being relevant to the students' cultural

context, local stories were also considered capable of stimulating emotional engagement, facilitating content comprehension, and building confidence in expression. The lesson design also included: pre-teaching vocabulary, pronunciation practice, and storytelling modeling by the teacher.

At the implementation stage of the action, the improvement of learning outcomes appeared significant. The average student score increased from 56.41 in the pretest to 78.54 in the posttest of cycle II. Improvement strategies such as pre-teaching vocabulary, simplifying story texts, and pronunciation practice proved effective. This finding is consistent with the review by Nair and Md Yunus, which showed that digital storytelling generally improved students' speaking skills through the enhancement of fluency, vocabulary, and motivation [24]. Meanwhile, observations showed an increase in students' active participation from 40% to more than 75%, and this finding supports research on folklore storytelling, which revealed that local traditional stories help expand vocabulary and enhance students' cultural literacy.

Overall, the implementation of local culture-based storytelling not only improved the academic aspects of speaking but also supported the affective development of students, including their self-confidence, motivation, and engagement in learning. These results enrich previous studies on digital storytelling, particularly because this study applied a method that is more accessible to local culture-based schools without complex technological facilities.

2. Acting

The implementation stage is the core of the Classroom Action Research (CAR) process, in which the designed strategy was applied in learning practice. This process occurred in two cycles, each comprising two meetings. The first cycle was utilized as an exploration phase to introduce the storytelling method through Bima local folktales that contained moral values and cultural content. This process began with reading aloud, introducing characters and plot, and practicing the pronunciation of key vocabulary. In this stage, students were guided to orally retell the story with a focus on pronunciation, grammar, and verbal expression (fluency and confidence).

Several challenges emerged, including students' difficulties in understanding the narrative's complexity and the limited time available for practice. These obstacles affected the fluency of storytelling for some students. Reflection on Cycle I indicated that, to create optimal results, modification of the strategy was necessary. Entering Cycle II, the researcher made several improvements based on the previous findings. The story texts were simplified to match the students' linguistic abilities better. Pre-teaching vocabulary became an important part of the initial stage of learning, accompanied by pronunciation drilling and group practice (peer rehearsal). This approach significantly helped

students in improving their self-confidence and speaking skills, as they practiced in a smaller and more supportive environment.

During this process, the teacher also modeled storytelling by paying attention to intonation, facial expressions, and body movements, which served as an example of effective oral communication. These changes produced positive results, as indicated by the increase in students' active participation in storytelling activities in Cycle II, which rose from around 40% to more than 75%. This finding is consistent with the study by Murad, Assadi, and Badarni, which found that the digital storytelling approach can improve students' fluency, vocabulary, and self-confidence in speaking.

This improvement was also supported by the research of Afidawati et al., which emphasized the importance of practice, communicative approaches, and culturally relevant media in reducing students' speaking anxiety [25]. Thus, the storytelling-based strategy not only affected students' cognitive outcomes but also created a learning atmosphere that supported their affective development, such as courage and motivation to perform speaking in front of the class.

Storytelling activities in English learning were carried out in an enjoyable and supportive atmosphere, so that students felt more comfortable and confident in expressing themselves orally. The learning process consisted of two action cycles, each comprising two meetings. Cycle I focused on the introduction of the storytelling method and the provision of basic speaking practice, while Cycle II aimed to refine the learning strategy based on the reflection results from the previous cycle.

In Cycle I, the activities began with a joint reading of local folktales, followed by a discussion of the storyline, the introduction of characters, and the practice of pronouncing key words. Students were then guided to retell the story orally. However, the results of the implementation showed that some students still experienced difficulties in constructing sentences, pronouncing words correctly, and delivering the story fluently. Learning mastery at this stage only reached 62.06%, an increase from 27.58% at the pretest stage, but still below the ideal target.

Based on the evaluation results, the researcher then made improvements in Cycle II. Changes were made by simplifying the story texts to make them easier to understand, providing pre-teaching vocabulary to strengthen vocabulary mastery, extending practice time through pronunciation drilling and peer rehearsal activities, and providing examples of verbal and non-verbal expression more intensively. This approach made students more prepared and confident when performing storytelling in front of the class.

The results in Cycle II showed a significant improvement. A total of 25 students, or 86.20% of the participants, succeeded in achieving or exceeding

the Minimum Mastery Criterion (MMC), which was 70. This indicates that the storytelling approach was not only effective in improving speaking skills individually but also encouraged the majority of students in the class to achieve the predetermined competency standard.

Overall, the implementation of the storytelling method has been proven to improve students' learning mastery in English, particularly in the aspect of speaking skills. In addition to the increased achievement scores, students also showed improvements in motivation, active participation, and confidence in using English communicatively. The action cycles, which were designed reflectively and gradually, enabled the learning process to become more responsive to students' needs and development, thereby creating a more meaningful and effective learning atmosphere.

3. Observing

Observation was conducted systematically during the implementation of the action in each cycle. In the first cycle, approximately 40% of students showed active involvement in storytelling activities, although they still faced obstacles, including prolonged pauses while speaking and limited verbal expression. Nevertheless, some students had already begun to show the courage to speak in front of the class and demonstrated basic intonation. In the second cycle, a significant improvement occurred, both in terms of participation (more than 75% of students actively speaking) and in aspects of speaking skills such as fluency, sentence structure, and more accurate vocabulary use.

In Cycle I, students' active participation only reached around 40%, with many students still hesitant and experiencing pauses while speaking. However, in Cycle II, a significant improvement occurred: more than 75% of students were active in storytelling activities, showing better expression, clearer intonation, and improvement in sentence structure and fluency. Students also appeared to

enjoy the learning process more. Observation data were obtained through observation sheets, field notes, and voice recordings, which were then analyzed to detect patterns of change and students' responses to the storytelling strategy.

4. Reflecting

The results of reflection showed that the implementation of the storytelling method had a positive impact on the improvement of students' speaking skills. In the first cycle, although there were still obstacles in sentence structure and pronunciation, an increase in students' motivation and courage to speak was observed. The improvement of the strategy in the second cycle contributed significantly to the enhancement of students' performance in speaking English. Students became more confident and active in delivering stories, while teachers found it easier to assess speaking aspects more authentically and contextually. The context of stories that are familiar to the students' cultural background made the learning more meaningful and enjoyable. Based on these reflection results, it can be concluded that the storytelling method is effective and feasible to be implemented in English learning at the junior high school level as a communicative, contextual, and appropriate approach in accordance with the characteristics of students at that level.

Reflection was carried out based on the results of observation and assessment. In Cycle I, storytelling learning had begun to show a positive impact, particularly on the improvement of students' motivation and courage to speak. However, due to the complexity of the material and the limited practice time, many students had not yet achieved optimal results. In Cycle II, after the strategy was refined, students' performance improved significantly both in terms of speaking techniques and emotional engagement with the material used. Learning became more enjoyable, meaningful, and contextual because the stories used originated from the students' local culture.

Table 2. Pretest and Posttest Results

| Stage | Average Score | Description |
|-------------------|---------------|----------------|
| Pretest | 56.41 | Before Action |
| Posttest Cycle I | 67.58 | After Cycle I |
| Posttest Cycle II | 78.54 | After Cycle II |

Based on Table 2, the development of the students' average scores is shown from the pretest stage to the posttest of Cycle II. The score difference of 22.13 points ($\Delta = 78.54 - 56.41$) confirmed a significant improvement. Furthermore, the N-Gain calculation of 0.51 (medium category) illustrates that the improvement shown in Table 2 was quite effective in improving students' speaking skills through the implementation of the storytelling method.

The N-Gain score of 0.51 belongs to the medium category based on Hake's classification. This score was calculated from the difference between the

pretest and final posttest scores against the maximum score (100), thus reflecting that the implementation of the storytelling method was quite effective in improving students' speaking skills. This result shows the success of the learning intervention in promoting students' cognitive improvement; however, to understand why the improvement falls into the medium category, several contributing factors need to be examined.

Second, the improvement only reached the “medium” category because several obstacles remained in the field implementation. For example, limited practice time prevented some students from achieving optimal fluency. In addition, differences in students’ initial abilities also became a challenge; students with lower abilities tended to require more time and intensive guidance to catch up. Similarly, although students’ enthusiasm increased, psychological factors such as shyness, anxiety, or lack of self-confidence were still found in some students, especially when they had to perform in front of the class.

Third, the medium result may also be caused by the lack of teachers’ experience in implementing the storytelling method to its fullest potential. Teachers’ skills in designing effective story-based learning, providing constructive feedback, and managing classroom dynamics greatly influence the success of this method. As shown in the study by Widodo, the success of storytelling highly depends on teacher training and the integration of appropriate strategies in each stage of learning.

Considering these factors, it can be concluded that the storytelling method is indeed effective in improving students’ speaking skills, but its implementation needs to be continuously refined. Support in the form of teacher training, additional oral practice time, and the use of technology, such as digital storytelling, can be solutions to encourage learning outcomes to reach a higher category. In addition, the sustainable implementation of this method is expected to foster a more lively and enjoyable English communication culture in the school environment.

The main finding of this study is that storytelling, particularly culture-based storytelling, was able to create communicative and meaningful learning. Bima folktales had an emotional impact and enriched the students’ linguistic context, making them feel more comfortable when speaking. These socio-cultural factors strengthened students’ sense of ownership of the material and made them more confident to perform.

This study has several significant advantages that make meaningful contributions to the development of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning practices, particularly at the junior high school level. The first advantage lies in the integration of the storytelling method with local cultural content, namely, folktales from Bima. This integration provided a strong contextual, emotional, and affective dimension, making the learning more relevant to the students’ lives. Not only did it strengthen linguistic skills such as vocabulary, sentence structure, and pronunciation, but this method also built cultural identity, moral values, and students’ emotional attachment to the material. Such an approach aligns with the direction of the Merdeka Curriculum policy, which encourages

context-based learning, character development, and cultural literacy.

Another advantage is the implementation of the reflective spiral model of Kemmis and McTaggart in two systematically designed action cycles. These cycles provided space to identify problems, carry out actions, observe their impacts, and conduct reflection that was used for continuous improvement. This method provided high flexibility and adaptability in accordance with the diverse dynamics of the classroom. The combination of quantitative and qualitative evaluation approaches was also a methodological strength that deserves appreciation. The data obtained were not only based on numerical scores from the pretest and posttest, but were also analyzed in depth through classroom observations, field notes, and reflections of teachers and students, thereby producing a holistic picture of the changes that occurred.

This study also reinforced and extended the findings of previous research. Earlier studies also stated that digital storytelling increased students’ self-confidence and enriched their vocabulary [27]. The same findings were also strengthened by research that revealed that paired storytelling was able to build students’ active participation as well as their expressive ability in English learning [28]. In addition, it emphasized that storytelling enhanced students’ courage, thinking structure, and quality of verbal expression. This study provides a new contribution by shifting the focus from digital media to a local folktale-based approach, making it relevant for schools in regions with limited access to technology but rich in cultural potential.

From the perspective of practical implementation, local culture-based storytelling proved to be an effective, contextual, and sustainable alternative method. Without requiring advanced technology, this strategy enabled students to learn actively, build self-confidence, and use English in meaningful and familiar contexts. Teachers also found it easier to adapt the material to the students’ character and needs, thus creating a more communicative, humanistic, and reflective classroom.

Nevertheless, this study had certain limitations. First, the limited implementation time affected the duration of speaking practice, which was not yet evenly distributed, especially for students with low initial ability who required more intensive guidance. Second, the success of storytelling highly depended on the teachers’ competence in designing and delivering stories that were both engaging and educational. In this study, teachers’ skills in these aspects still need improvement. Third, since the research was conducted in a specific school context with a particular cultural background, the generalization of the results to a broader population still needs to be further examined through comparative studies in

other regions or with different storytelling methods [29].

Theoretically, this study contributes to the development of a culture-based learning model that emphasizes the importance of students' emotional, affective, and local identity engagement in building language skills. The implication is that this model can be replicated and modified by other teachers, both in the context of English learning and in other subjects that emphasize active communication and character building.

Thus, this study not only answered the need for effective and affordable learning methods but also presented a grounded and meaningful learning model, while simultaneously being relevant to the challenges of twenty-first-century education: developing students' communication skills, cultural literacy, and character in an integrated manner.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research conducted through two action cycles, it can be concluded that the implementation of the storytelling method was proven effective in improving the English speaking skills of seventh-grade students at SMPN 1 Sape. This was evident from the significant increase in students' average scores and learning mastery percentage, as well as the improvement of students' active participation and self-confidence in speaking. Thus, the storytelling method can be used as a communicative and contextual learning strategy that is appropriate to the characteristics of junior high school students.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The researcher would like to sincerely thank STKIP Taman Siswa Bima, the English Education Study Program, and SMPN 1 Sape for their support in this study. Special appreciation is also extended to my beloved father and mother, whose guidance, prayers, and unconditional love have been a source of strength and inspiration throughout this research.

The researcher gratefully acknowledges the unwavering support and encouragement provided by my siblings, whose motivation has been invaluable throughout this study. Sincere appreciation is also extended to my dear friends and close relatives for their prayers, dedication, and meaningful contributions. Finally, the researcher conveys profound gratitude to the individual who has accompanied me at present, for the guidance, motivation, shared experiences, and valuable lessons in patience and maturity, which have greatly contributed to my personal growth in facing the dynamics of life.

REFERENCES

- [1] S. F. Ramadhani, "EFFECTIVENESS OF STORYTELLING METHOD," vol. 3, no. 2, pp. 45–56, 2024.
- [2] R. Adolph, "濟無No Title No Title No Title," vol. 78, pp. 1–23, 2016.
- [3] A. Rahmawati, B. Suhatmady, D. Sucahyo, and I. Hermagustiana, "Storytelling in English Language Learning: Boosting Confidence and Discourse in EFL Contexts," vol. 7, pp. 1–13, 2025.
- [4] E. S. Daeli and A. Laoli, "Improving the Students' Speaking Skill Through Storytelling Strategy at the Eighth Grade of UPTD SMP Negeri 5 Gunungsitoli in 2021 / 2022," *J. Pendidik. Tambusai*, vol. 7, no. 2, pp. 5058–5064, 2023.
- [5] M. Rahmatun Nisa, "The Effectiveness of Storytelling Technique to Enhance Speaking Skill for," p. 41, 2022.
- [6] B. Budiarti, J. Juhansar, D. A. Rahmawati, K. F. Alamsyah, A. M. Mawar, and S. Sudiro, "EFL Students' Perceptions on the Use of Storytelling towards English Speaking Proficiency," *Edumaspul J. Pendidik*, vol. 6, no. 2, pp. 2284–2288, 2022, doi: 10.33487/edumaspul.v6i2.3308.
- [7] T. Murad, J. Assadi, and H. Badarni, "Digital Storytelling and EFL Speaking Skill Improvement," *J. Lang. Teach. Res.*, vol. 14, no. 5, pp. 1189–1198, 2023, doi: 10.17507/jltr.1405.06.
- [8] S. M. P. St and A. Nabire, "Peningkatan Keterampilan Berbicara Bahasa Inggris Melalui Program English Conversation Club bagi Siswa," vol. 5, no. 4, pp. 5197–5203, 2024.
- [9] Y. Kurniawati and S. Setyowati, "Meningkatkan kemampuan berbicara anak melalui metode bercerita dengan media big book di ppt tulip surabaya," *J. Dharma PGSD*, pp. 1–6, 2014.
- [10] H. Tanti, "STORYTELLING TO IMPROVE STUDENTS' SPEAKING ABILITY," no. 4, p. 6, 2015.
- [11] V. Nair and M. Md Yunus, "Using Digital Storytelling to Improve Pupils' Speaking Skills in the Age of COVID-19," *Sustain.*, vol. 14, no. 15, 2022, doi: 10.3390/su14159215.
- [12] A. Putri and M. F. Sya, "Tantangan Berbicara Bahasa Inggris Pada Siswa Sekolah Dasar," *J. Karimah Tauhid*, vol. 2, no. 2, pp. 215–220, 2023.
- [13] A. Mardhiah, N. Kamaliah, H. Helmiyadi, and L. Lathifatuddini, "Enhancing Indonesian EFL Learners' Speaking Skills through Digital Storytelling based on Local Folktales," *SAGA J. English Lang. Teach. Appl. Linguist.*, vol. 5, no. 2, pp. 81–93, 2024, doi: 10.21460/saga.2024.52.190.
- [14] D. S. Dewi, R. Hartono, M. Saleh, and S. Wahyuni, "Incorporating Multiliteracy Pedagogy Elements Into EFL Speaking Class Through Digital Storytelling," *Issues Lang. Stud.*, vol. 12, no. 2, pp. 79–97, 2023, doi: 10.33736/ils.5545.2023.
- [15] S. Kemmis and R. McTaggart, *The Action Research Planner*, 3rd ed. 1988.
- [16] N. T. T. Hien and V. T. Phuong, "The effectiveness of the storytelling technique on students' achievement and motivation in English speaking skills," *Multidiscip. Rev.*, vol. 6, no. Special Issue, 2023, doi: 10.31893/multirev.2023spe011.
- [17] Inten Mujizat, "the Effectiveness of Using Storytelling Technique on," vol. 01, p. 21, 2017.
- [18] S. E. Elvera, S. E., & Yesita Astarina, "(2021).," *Metodol. Penelitian. Penerbit Andi*.
- [19] Hamida, "The Influence of Using Cartoon Video on

- Students' Speaking Ability," *J. Educ.*, vol. 1, no. 4, pp. 122–129, 2021.
- [20] M. B. Miles, A. M. Huberman, and J. Saldana, "Methods of Exploring," *Qual. Data Anal. A Methods Sourceb.*, pp. 121–159, 2014.
- [21] S. Dianelo, S. T. Miolo, and M. S. Ibrahim, "The Application of Storytelling Technique in Improving Students' Speaking Skill," *Int. J. Res. Rev.*, vol. 10, no. 7, pp. 146–159, 2023, doi: 10.52403/ijrr.20230720.
- [22] U. R. Swari, "Using Storytelling To Improve Students' Ability in Speaking," *J. Cult. (Culture, Lang. Lit. Rev.*, vol. 9, no. 1, pp. 45–57, 2022, doi: 10.53873/culture.v9i1.296.
- [23] H. Afidawati, F. I. Arrasyid, and L. Ikawati, "Minimizing EFL Learners' Speaking Anxiety in the Post-Pandemic Era," *JEELS (Journal English Educ. Linguist. Stud.*, vol. 11, no. 1, pp. 107–130, 2024, doi: 10.30762/jeels.v11i1.1886.
- [24] V. Nair and M. M. Yunus, "A systematic review of digital storytelling in improving speaking skills," *Sustain.*, vol. 13, no. 17, 2021, doi: 10.3390/su13179829.
- [25] J. Steel, "Reading to Dogs in schools: a controlled feasibility study of an online reading to Dogs intervention," *Int. J. Educ. Res.*, vol. 117, no. December 2022, p. 102117, 2023, doi: 10.1016/j.ijer.2022.102117.
- [26] I. Yulianawati, S. Pebriyanto, A. A. Hafidz Dewanka, and Y. Zakiah, "Exploring Students' Perceptions of Storytelling as a Tool for Enhancing Speaking Skills," *Jadila J. Dev. Innov. Lang. Lit. Educ.*, vol. 5, no. 1, pp. 14–28, 2025, doi: 10.52760/jadila.v5i1.803.
- [27] P. T. Anh Nga, L. H. Hoa, and P. G. Anh Vu, "From Words to Wonders : EFL Students ' Perceptions of Digital Storytelling for Language Learning," *Int. J. Lang. Instr.*, vol. 3, no. 4, pp. 59–92, 2024.
- [28] A. A. Belly and D. Pratiwi, "Jurnal Pendidikan Progresif Enhancing Students ' Speaking Abilities through Paired Storytelling," vol. 14, no. 02, pp. 997–1007, 2024, doi: 10.23960/jpp.v14.i2.202473.
- [29] A. Nelci, K. Lomi, M. Aleksius, and M. Y. Sahan, "Folklore Storytelling: A Study into the Effectiveness of Traditional Short Story for Enhancing Vocabulary Development in EFL Learners," *Regist. J.*, vol. 17, no. 02, pp. 279–300, 2024, doi: 10.18326/rgt.v17i2.279-300.