

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

English has become a global language, playing a crucial role in communication, education, and professional life worldwide. For junior high school students in Indonesia, mastering English is no longer just an academic requirement but a vital skill for their future. In the context of the Indonesian education system, English is taught as a foreign language (EFL), meaning students primarily learn it in the classroom rather than through daily exposure. This makes the teaching methods used in schools incredibly important for effective language acquisition.

Learning English involves developing four core skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Among these, speaking is often considered the most challenging yet essential skill for effective communication. It is the primary means by which individuals express their thoughts, ideas, and feelings, engage in social interactions, and participate actively in academic and professional settings. For junior high school students, developing strong speaking skills can significantly boost their self-confidence, improve their ability to interact with others, and open up opportunities for higher education and better career prospects in an increasingly interconnected world. As Anggarista and Wahyudin (2022) and Simamora (2022) highlight that proficiency in speaking is directly linked to effective communication and academic success. Fluent speakers can contribute more actively in class discussions, ask questions, and articulate their understanding of subjects, thereby strengthening their overall comprehension.

However, many junior high school students face significant difficulties in developing their English speaking skills. These challenges are multifaceted and can stem from various factors. Firstly, a common issue is a limited vocabulary, which hinders students from expressing themselves fully and accurately. They might know many words but passively expressed such as in reading or listening skills, yet they struggle to recall and use them actively in spoken sentences. Secondly, pronunciation can be a major hurdle. Students often carry over pronunciation patterns from their native language, leading to miscommunication or a lack of clarity. Uncertainty about how to pronounce words correctly can also make them hesitant to speak. Thirdly, grammatical accuracy is another concern. While students might understand grammar rules in theory, applying them spontaneously during conversation can be difficult, leading to errors that affect the clarity of their message. Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, many students suffer from low self-confidence and high anxiety when it comes to speaking English. The fear of making mistakes, being judged by peers or teachers, or simply not being understood can lead to shyness and a reluctance to participate in speaking activities. This anxiety creates a barrier to practice, which is crucial for skill development.

Traditional teaching methods, which often rely on lectures, rote memorization of vocabulary lists, and grammar drills, may not be sufficient to address these complex challenges. As Wahyuniati (2022) points out, such methods, with minimal student engagement, can prevent students from applying their language skills in real-world situations. In a world where learning is becoming more remote and

dynamic, as noted by Miller and Lamb (2017), educators need interactive and engaging strategies that encourage active participation. There is a growing need for innovative pedagogical approaches that can make language learning more enjoyable, less intimidating, and more effective in fostering genuine communicative competence.

One such innovative approach that has gained attention is the storytelling technique. Storytelling is a powerful and ancient art form that has been used across cultures for various purposes, including entertainment, cultural preservation, and the transmission of important messages (Perzycka & Hrycak, 2024). In an educational context, storytelling is a dynamic and effective learning tool that can help students develop their speaking skills while making the learning experience pleasant and meaningful (Green & Pomeroy, 2018). The core idea behind storytelling in language education is to immerse students in a narrative, allowing them to engage with the language in a natural and meaningful way. Choi and Lee (2022) emphasize that the storytelling technique helps students become fully involved in a narrative, which aids memory retention and boosts their confidence in speaking fluently and coherently.

The effect of storytelling extends beyond just speaking. Mason (2020) views the narrative technique as useful not only for developing speaking skills but also for improving listening, understanding, and critical thinking. When students listen to stories, they practice comprehension and gain a better understanding of language structure and communication contexts. Through storytelling, students can expand

their vocabulary and learn diverse expressions used in various situations, enabling them to communicate more effectively in their daily lives. Elmaniah (2020) finds that storytelling also allows students to learn in a joyful environment without the burden of academic pressure, which is often a barrier to language learning. This strategy encourages students to practice and improve their speaking skills naturally and enjoyably, without feeling forced. Therefore, storytelling is more than just a teaching approach; it is a learning experience that can build positive attitudes towards English learning in general.

Storytelling has long been considered an effective learning approach, not just for capturing students' attention but also for improving their speaking abilities (Inayah 2015). The current research has the potential to significantly contribute to the creation of more innovative and relevant English teaching practices for students. As technology evolves, educators must adapt their teaching strategies to the changing dynamics and difficulties. Storytelling, with its great adaptability, can be an excellent option for improving student engagement, especially in limited learning environments. This technique offers students a unique opportunity to practice speaking in a supportive setting where the focus is on presenting a tale rather than delivering grammatically perfect sentences. The collaborative and engaging nature of storytelling builds a sense of community while also reducing the fear that comes with speaking a foreign language.

Furthermore, storytelling promotes deeper engagement with knowledge by allowing students to personally connect with the material, which improves

understanding and retention. Research has shown that adding storytelling to language learning significantly improves students' speaking and listening skills (Haifa, 2024; Apriani & Rusiyono, 2023). According to Young (2024), storytelling not only improves linguistic abilities but also increases the listener's imagination and emotional involvement, making it an excellent technique for creating a rich and immersive learning environment. Students' emotional connections to the story also help them remember and use the language more effectively.

Several studies have demonstrated the benefit of storytelling in improving English language skills. Tuan and Nghia (2021) mention that students who learned English through storytelling improved their speaking skills more than those who were taught using traditional techniques. Additionally, data from Izgi-Onbasili, Avsar-Tuncay, Sezginsoy-Seker, and Kiray (2022) suggest that students participating in storytelling activities tend to show higher levels of self-confidence compared to those who do not engage in such activities. This increased self-assurance plays a crucial role in motivating students to continue practicing their speaking skills and to participate more actively in learning processes.

Given the proven benefits of the storytelling technique, it is critical to investigate its effect on junior high school students' speaking abilities. By investigating the relationship between storytelling and speaking skills, this study hopes to shed light on the effectiveness of storytelling as a pedagogical tool. Such insights can motivate educators to add more creative and interactive teaching approaches into their classrooms, creating a learning environment that not only

enhances students' speaking skills but also promotes their overall engagement with the English language.

To summarize, storytelling is a powerful and multi-faceted learning tool that greatly assists students in building speaking skills. Storytelling fosters self-confidence, encourages active participation, and enhances emotional connection, creating a rich and supportive atmosphere for language development. Therefore, this study is very important to find out whether the storytelling technique can affect students' speaking.

1.2 Research Problems

1. How does the storytelling technique affect the different parts of speaking skills like pronunciation, vocabulary, and confidence ?
2. What is the difference in students speaking skills before and after they are taught using storytelling technique?

1.3 Aims of Study

The goal of this study was to identify and examine the contribution of storytelling towards the speaking components and the effect of storytelling towards the students speaking skill. It is believed that this research would provide beneficial advice for educators seeking to implement more effective teaching approaches. A better comprehension of the influence of storytelling is intended to produce a more dynamic and enjoyable learning environment for students.

The primary aim of this study is to investigate the effectiveness of the storytelling technique in enhancing students' speaking skills in English as a second language. Specifically, the study seeks to achieve the following objectives:

1. **To Assess Improvement in Speaking Skills:** The first aim is to evaluate whether the implementation of storytelling techniques leads to measurable improvements in various components of speaking skills, including fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary usage, grammar accuracy, and overall confidence in speaking. By comparing pre-test and post-test scores, the study aims to quantify the extent of improvement among students.
2. **To Explore Student Engagement and Motivation:** Another key aim is to explore how storytelling influences student engagement and motivation in the language learning process. The study seeks to understand whether the narrative format of storytelling fosters a more enjoyable and interactive learning environment, thereby encouraging students to participate more actively in speaking activities.
3. **To Identify Factors Influencing Effectiveness:** The study also aims to identify the factors that may influence the effectiveness of storytelling as a teaching method. This includes examining variables such as the selection of stories, the teacher's narrative skills, classroom dynamics, and the cultural relevance of the stories used. Understanding these factors will provide insights into how to optimize the storytelling approach for diverse student populations.

4. To Provide Recommendations for Educators: Finally, the study aims to provide practical recommendations for educators on how to effectively implement storytelling techniques in their classrooms. By analyzing the findings, the research intends to offer guidance on best practices, potential challenges, and strategies for integrating storytelling into the language curriculum to maximize its benefits for students.
5. Through these aims, the study aspires to contribute to the existing body of knowledge on language teaching methodologies and provide valuable insights for educators seeking innovative ways to enhance their students' speaking skills.

1.4 Significance of Study

This study is highly significant, both conceptually and practically. In theory, this study shed light on the utilization of storytelling strategies in English instruction. The findings of this study can be used as a basis for future research into creative teaching approaches. Understanding how storytelling might improve speaking skills may lead to the development of a more effective and engaging learning technique. On the practical side, this research was assist both educators and students. Educators can use the findings of this study to develop more effective teaching practices that meet the requirements of their pupils. The storytelling technique is intended to increase students' motivation to learn and active participation in the learning process, This increased overall student learning outcomes.

1.4.1 Implication

This study was support and aligns with the theoritical paradigm put forth by Sutarto and Puji Astuti (2020). English teachers can use the storytelling technique to make learning more engaging and interactive, this study also demonstrates that the storytelling technique can help students become more proficient speakers. Using the storytelling technique can be one of the most effective learning strategies to help students improve their writing and speaking abilities.

Further, Prasetyo and Sulistyowati (2020) emphasize that, by making learning more engaging and interactive. English teachers can also use it to help students become more proficient speakers and boost their confidence when speaking. This study also demonstrates that storytelling is one of the alternative teaching strategies that can be used to help students become better speakers.

Next, this study also was add and strengthen the study of Setiawati and Mardiana (2019) especially for teaching English to young students. This study also contributed more. Sumarni and Suseno's (2022) findings reveals digital storytelling promotes vocabulary growth in students. In this context, the findings of the study presented an understanding of the use of storytelling techniques as an integral part of the English curirculum.

Therefore, this study can be utilized the findings as a guide for teachers to create engaging and more successful English learning strategies for young learnes.

Additionally, the study discovered, in detail that the narrative technique could assist students in developing both organized and improve speaking abilities.

1.4.2 Application

The findings of this study hold potential contributions across several key stakeholders:

1. **Schools:** Storytelling is a teaching strategy that schools can use. Students are more engaged in the learning process and more inclined to practice speaking when they are involved in storytelling activities. Teachers can, for instance, hold storytelling sessions where students can share their tales either alone or with others. Students' confidence is increased in addition to their speaking abilities.
2. **English Teachers:** Providing teachers with more resources is another way that this research might be applied. Digital technologies, educational tools, and storybooks can all be used to enhance classroom storytelling activities. According to a study by Sumarni and Suseno (2022), students can enhance their vocabulary a crucial component of speaking abilities—by using digital storytelling. Teachers can give students more interesting and pertinent learning experiences by utilizing technology.