

The Effectiveness of Peer Storytelling on Students' Speaking at SMAN 7 Kota Kediri

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Abstract: This study investigates the effectiveness of peer storytelling in improving eleventh-grade students' speaking at SMAN 7 Kota Kediri in the academic year 2025–2026. Many EFL students frequently encounter linguistic limitations, psychological barriers such as anxiety, and monotonous classroom methods that restrict authentic communicative practice. The purpose of this study is to examine whether peer storytelling using recount texts significantly improves students' speaking performance. A quantitative approach with a one-group pre-test and post-test design was employed, involving 22 students selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected primarily through performance-based speaking tests assessed using an analytical scoring rubric covering fluency, vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar, and accuracy, with a supporting Likert-scale questionnaire. Statistical analysis using the Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test revealed a statistically significant improvement in students' speaking scores ($p < 0.001$), with the mean score increasing from 46.18 (pre-test) to 61.45 (post-test). All 22 students demonstrated positive score gains. The questionnaire results indicated positive student responses toward peer storytelling implementation. These findings confirm that peer storytelling through recount texts effectively enhances students' speaking performance by fostering a collaborative, low-anxiety learning environment. Unlike previous studies that examined peer interaction or storytelling separately, this study uniquely combines both strategies through recount texts with senior high school students. Future research should involve control groups and longer treatment periods.

Keywords: peer storytelling; student speaking; recount text; quasi-experimental; EFL

INTRODUCTION

Speaking is crucial in language learning; however, EFL students still find it particularly challenging. Many learners struggle with speaking despite having studied English for several years. Difficulties stem from two main sources: linguistic limitations (limited vocabulary, weak pronunciation, poor grammar, and lack of fluency) and psychological factors (fear of making mistakes and low self-confidence). When students are asked to speak in front of others, they often feel nervous and tend to avoid speaking. Horwitz et al. (1986) explain that foreign language learners may experience anxiety due to the fear of negative evaluation from others. Therefore, improving speaking requires not only language knowledge but also a supportive environment encouraging active participation.

In many EFL classrooms, speaking difficulties are also exacerbated by monotonous teaching methods. Common activities such as grammar drills, scripted conversations, and memorization-based assignments prioritize accuracy over fluency, failing to provide authentic communicative practice (Harmer, 2007). Nation and Newton (2020) emphasize that fluency develops through meaningful interaction rather than isolated practice. Consequently, students understand language forms but struggle in spontaneous communication, necessitating communicative strategies that encourage natural language use.

One effective communicative strategy is storytelling. Storytelling allows students to express ideas, experiences, and feelings meaningfully, significantly improving oral language development and participation (Isbell et al., 2004). When integrated with peer interaction, storytelling helps students feel more comfortable and confident. Qoni'ah et al. (2025) explain that peer interaction reduces anxiety and encourages active participation. In this study, storytelling is implemented through recount texts, where students retell memorable experiences using a clear chronological structure (orientation, events, reorientation). This structure reduces cognitive load, allowing students to focus on fluency and pronunciation rather than content organization.

However, previous studies have examined peer interaction or storytelling separately, often involving younger learners or combining storytelling with other strategies. None have specifically investigated peer storytelling through recount texts in senior high school settings with structured assessments of individual speaking components. Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by examining the effectiveness of peer storytelling on eleventh-grade students' speaking. This study is also relevant to *Kurikulum Merdeka* (Phase F), which expects students to communicate ideas, consider peer perspectives, and engage in responsive interaction. Accordingly, this research addresses the following questions: (1) How is the eleventh-grade students' speaking before being taught using peer storytelling? (2) How is it after being taught using peer storytelling? (3) How is the students' behavior when peer storytelling is implemented?

METHODS

This study employed a quantitative approach with a one-group pre-test and post-test design (Ary et al., 2019). The design was chosen to measure students' speaking performance before and after treatment within a single class without a control class, comparing scores to identify the effectiveness of the intervention. The population was all eleventh-grade students at SMAN 7 Kota Kediri in the 2025/2026 academic year. The sample comprised 22 students (12 females, 10 males) selected through purposive sampling based on criteria: they had previously learned recount texts but still experienced speaking difficulties (Fraenkel et al., 2012). The primary instrument was a speaking test administered as a pre-test and post-test. Students were asked to retell personal experiences orally, assessed using an analytical rubric covering five components: pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and accuracy (Harris, 1969; Brown, 2001), each scored 1-5. A supporting Likert-scale questionnaire (10 items) was used to gather data on students' confidence, motivation, participation, and speaking practice.

The procedure consisted of: (1) a pre-test to measure initial speaking ability; (2) three treatment sessions implementing peer storytelling (Meeting 1: orientation; Meeting 2: events; Meeting 3: reorientation and full storytelling in pairs/small groups); (3) a post-test using the same rubric; and (4) the distribution of the questionnaire. Data from the pre-test and post-test were analyzed using SPSS version 23. A Shapiro-Wilk normality test was performed ($p < 0.05$, data not normally distributed), leading to the use of the Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test for hypothesis testing (significance level $\alpha = 0.05$). Descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, min, max) were also calculated.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Students' Speaking Before the Implementation of Peer Storytelling

The pre-test results revealed that students' speaking performance was relatively low. The highest score was 84, the lowest was 34, and the mean score was 46.18 (SD = 13.51). Detailed component scores indicated significant difficulties: most students scored between 1 and 2 for fluency (hesitation, limited expression), accuracy (sentence structure errors), pronunciation (influenced by L1), vocabulary (limited range), and grammar (incorrect sentence formation). These findings confirm that students lacked speaking practice, confidence, and organizational skills before the intervention.

Students' Speaking After the Implementation of Peer Storytelling

Following three treatment sessions, students demonstrated marked improvement. The post-test results showed the highest score increased to 92, the lowest to 44, and the mean score rose significantly to 61.45 (SD = 12.86). All five speaking components improved, with vocabulary showing the most substantial gain, followed by fluency. Pronunciation and grammar showed more moderate improvement due to the limited explicit corrective feedback inherent in peer activities.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Pre-test and Post-test Scores

Test	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Pre-test	22	46.18	13.51	34	84
Post	22	61.45	12.86	34	92

The Shapiro-Wilk test indicated non-normal distribution for the difference scores ($p = 0.001$). Consequently, the Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test was applied, revealing 22 positive ranks, 0 negative ranks, and 0 ties. The Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) was $p < 0.001$, confirming a statistically significant improvement. Thus, the alternative hypothesis (H_a) is accepted: peer storytelling is effective in enhancing students' speaking.

Students' Behavior When Peer Storytelling Is Implemented

The questionnaire results (Table 2) indicated overwhelmingly positive student responses toward peer storytelling. Most items scored above the midpoint (3.00). Students particularly appreciated the opportunities for speaking practice ($M=3.55$) and active participation ($M=3.41$). However, confidence-related items ($M=2.86-2.91$) were slightly lower, suggesting that while anxiety was reduced, a few students remained uneasy—a common challenge in collaborative settings (Larenas, 2019). Observations during treatment confirmed that students actively engaged in pair/group discussions, shared personal experiences, and supported each other, demonstrating positive behavioral changes.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of Questionnaire Responses

Question	Mean	Std. Deviat
Q1 (Confidence in stroytelling)	3.00	1.024
Q2 (Reduced nervousness)	2.86	.941
Q3 (Active participation)	3.23	.752
Q4 (Enjoyment of activity)	3.41	.734
Q5 (Speaking practice opportunities)	3.55	.510
Q6 (Peer support)	3.36	.902
Q7 (Motivation to speak)	3.05	.844
Q8 (Feeling Com	2.91	.868
Q9 (Improved interaction)	3.14	.941
Q10 (Overall positive experience)	3.09	.750

The findings confirm that peer storytelling effectively improves students' speaking performance. The significant increase in mean scores (46.18 to 61.45) occurred because peer storytelling provided structured, meaningful communication practice. Students expressed ideas interactively in a supportive environment, aligning with Brown's (2004) definition of speaking as an interactive meaning-making process. The greatest improvements in vocabulary and fluency stemmed from repeated oral practice and peer modeling, as emphasized by Harmer (2007) and Nation & Newton (2020). Conversely, the modest gains in pronunciation highlight that peer storytelling alone cannot substitute explicit pronunciation instruction, as students rarely provided systematic corrective feedback on specific sounds.

The supportive learning environment, fostered by pair/small group work, reduced speaking anxiety and encouraged participation. This corroborates Qoni'ah et al. (2025), who found peer interaction boosts engagement. Additionally, the results align with Yan and Zhao (2019), Pakpahan et al. (2025), and Belly et al. (2024), who reported that storytelling enhances oral proficiency, confidence, and fluency. Despite these positive outcomes, this study has limitations. The absence of a control group and the short treatment period (three meetings) limit generalizability and prevent assessment of long-term retention. Future research should include control groups, extend treatment duration, and explore the strategy's impact on other skills or educational levels.

CONCLUSION

This study investigated the effectiveness of peer storytelling using recount texts on the speaking of eleventh-grade students at SMAN 7 Kota Kediri. Students' speaking before the intervention was low (mean=46.18), characterized by limited fluency, vocabulary, and accuracy, alongside high anxiety and monotonous instructional methods. After implementing peer storytelling across three meetings, students' speaking performance significantly improved (mean=61.45). Among the five components, vocabulary and fluency showed the most improvement. The Wilcoxon test ($p<0.001$) confirmed a

significant difference, accepting the alternative hypothesis. Questionnaire results and observed behaviors confirmed positive student responses, highlighting increased participation, interaction, and practice opportunities, though some anxiety persisted. These findings affirm that peer storytelling using recount texts is an effective, engaging strategy for enhancing EFL speaking skills by providing a collaborative and structured communicative environment. However, limitations such as the lack of a control group suggest cautious interpretation, and further research with extended treatments and broader samples is recommended.

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