

The Influence of the Storytelling Method and Picture Media on the Speaking Skills of Fifth-Grade Students at SDN 5 Tanrutedong

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is (1) To analyze the influence of storytelling on the speaking ability of fifth grade students at SD Negeri 5 Tanrutedong (2) To analyze the influence of image media on the speaking ability of fifth grade students at SD Negeri 5 Tanrutedong (3) To analyze the influence of storytelling and image media on speaking ability. This type of research is descriptive quantitative with a correlation approach. The population in this study was all fifth grade students at SD Negeri 5 Tanrutedong totaling 30 students. Data collection was carried out by means of questionnaires and documentation. Validity test using Bivariate Person correlation technique and reliability test using Cronbach alpha technique. Data analysis technique was carried out by descriptive analysis and inferential statistical analysis. The results of this study indicate that (1) There is a positive and significant influence of storytelling on the speaking ability of fifth grade students at SD Negeri 5 Tanrutedong with a significance value of $0.00 < 0.05$ and a correlation value of 43.8% (2) There is a positive and significant influence of image media on the speaking ability of fifth grade students at SD Negeri 5 Tanrutedong with a significance value of $0.01 < 0.05$ and a correlation value of 32.1% (3) There is a positive and significant influence of storytelling and image media on the speaking ability of fifth grade students at SD Negeri 5 Tanrutedong with a significance value of $0.00 < 0.05$ and a correlation value of 60.9%.

Keywords: Storytelling; Image Media; Speaking Skills

INTRODUCTION

Speaking skills are a fundamental component of language proficiency and play a crucial role in helping students communicate effectively in various social and academic contexts. In elementary school, speaking is not only a medium for expressing thoughts and feelings but also a tool for developing confidence, interaction, and cognitive growth. As stated by Tarigan, speaking is a productive oral skill that enables learners to articulate ideas in a clear, structured, and

meaningful manner. However, in many Indonesian elementary schools, including SDN 5 Tanrutedong, students often demonstrate limited speaking ability due to insufficient exposure to effective learning strategies that stimulate verbal expression. This condition highlights the need for innovative instructional methods that can enhance students' speaking competence from an early stage.

Current observations in fifth-grade classrooms at SDN 5 Tanrutedong reveal that many students struggle to articulate ideas fluently, construct coherent sentences, and speak confidently in front of others. Several factors contribute to this issue, including the dominance of teacher-centered instruction, lack of opportunities to practice speaking, and minimal use of engaging learning media. Traditional approaches such as lecturing tend to place students in passive roles, limiting their chances to develop oral communication skills. Consequently, students become hesitant, easily anxious, and less motivated to participate in speaking activities. These challenges indicate that classroom practices must shift toward more interactive, student-centered strategies that actively involve learners in meaningful speaking tasks.

One strategy that has gained attention for its effectiveness in fostering speaking development is the storytelling method. Storytelling is a pedagogical approach that encourages students to retell narratives using their own words, expressions, and creativity. It is widely known to support language development because it integrates imagination, comprehension, and verbal expression. Through storytelling, students learn how to organize ideas sequentially, use appropriate vocabulary, adjust intonation, and convey meaning with clarity. Research by Isbell et al. (2017) further emphasizes that storytelling enhances children's linguistic awareness and expressive abilities by creating enjoyable and memorable learning experiences. Its interactive nature also allows students to practice speaking in a supportive and engaging environment.

Aside from instructional methods, the use of appropriate media is essential to support effective learning. Visual media especially pictures play a significant role in helping students construct meaning and visualize the content they wish to express verbally. According to the picture superiority effect and dual coding theory, visual stimuli help learners grasp and store information more effectively compared to verbal explanations alone. Picture media such as picture series, story illustrations, and flashcards provide concrete references that stimulate imagination and assist students in organizing their ideas before speaking. For young learners at the elementary level, such visuals make abstract concepts more tangible and help bridge comprehension gaps that may occur during verbal interactions.

The integration of storytelling and picture media is considered highly effective in enhancing students' speaking skills because both elements complement one another. Storytelling provides a platform for structured verbal expression, while picture media serve as visual scaffolding that guides students in constructing their narratives. Together, they create a learning environment that is interactive,

enjoyable, and cognitively stimulating. Empirical studies support the effectiveness of this combination. Research by Azizah & Suprpto (2021), for instance, found that picture-assisted storytelling significantly improves fluency, clarity, and coherence in students' oral performance. Likewise, Dewi & Pratiwi (2022) reported that integrating visual aids with storytelling increases students' confidence and motivation to speak.

In the context of SDN 5 Tanrutedong, these approaches hold strong potential for addressing existing challenges in speaking instruction. Students in the fifth grade demonstrate high enthusiasm for visual and story-based activities, making storytelling with picture media a suitable method to attract their attention and increase participation. Preliminary observations suggest that when students are given story illustrations or picture sequences, they become more confident in verbally expressing ideas because the images help them understand the storyline and reduce anxiety. This suggests that picture-based storytelling may serve as an effective intervention for improving speaking ability, yet its impact has not been formally measured within the school's learning environment.

Despite the theoretical and empirical support for these methods, there is still a lack of research examining the combined influence of storytelling and picture media on speaking skills, particularly in the context of rural Indonesian schools such as SDN 5 Tanrutedong. Most existing studies focus on either storytelling or media pictures separately, without exploring how the two variables interact to produce significant improvements in speaking performance. Therefore, a systematic investigation is needed to determine whether the combination of these techniques can effectively enhance speaking skill components such as fluency, intonation, accuracy of vocabulary, sentence structure, and clarity of expression among fifth-grade students.

Based on this rationale, the present study aims to analyze the influence of the storytelling method and picture media both individually and simultaneously on the speaking skills of fifth-grade students at SDN 5 Tanrutedong. This investigation is expected to contribute to the development of more effective speaking instruction practices in Indonesian language education, particularly at the elementary level. Furthermore, the study provides practical implications for teachers seeking innovative ways to improve student engagement and oral proficiency. The findings will also serve as a reference for future research on creative learning strategies that integrate narrative and visual components to support communication skills in young learners.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Recent research highlights that the storytelling method provides an effective foundation for developing speaking skills in young learners. Storytelling encourages students to express ideas in a meaningful and structured way, which helps them improve fluency, vocabulary, and narrative sequence. Studies show that

when learners retell or recreate stories, they practice language patterns repeatedly and become more confident in speaking. Al-Mansour and Al-Shorman (2021) found that storytelling increases students' fluency because it provides a clear sequence of events that guides oral expression. Similarly, Isbell (2020) explains that storytelling strengthens narrative skills by helping students describe characters, settings, and actions in their own words, while Putra and Sari (2019) report that storytelling reduces speaking anxiety and encourages active participation.

Picture media also plays an important role in supporting speaking development. Visuals such as picture sequences, flashcards, and illustrated stories provide concrete cues that help learners generate ideas, recall vocabulary, and organize their speech. According to Nurhayati (2020), pictures reduce cognitive load by giving students something visible to talk about, making speaking tasks easier for young learners. Wahyuni and Febriyanti (2021) further note that picture sequences help students produce more coherent and detailed oral descriptions. In addition, Suryani and Rahma (2018) show that visual materials increase motivation and engagement, which contributes to better speaking performance.

Speaking skills themselves consist of fluency, accuracy, pronunciation, vocabulary use, and coherence. Recent studies emphasize that young learners need structured support to develop these components. Hidayat (2022) found that guided oral activities help students produce clearer and more fluent speech, while Pratiwi (2017) highlights the importance of visual and contextual support in helping children connect ideas and form coherent sentences.

The combination of storytelling and picture media has been shown to be particularly effective for improving speaking skills. When storytelling is supported by visuals, students can follow the storyline more easily and speak with greater confidence. Fitriana (2020) reports that picture-supported storytelling significantly improves fluency and narrative coherence in elementary students. Likewise, Dewi and Putri (2023) found that visuals paired with storytelling help learners produce longer, clearer, and more accurate oral descriptions. These findings suggest that using both storytelling and picture media creates a supportive learning environment that enhances students' ability to speak confidently and coherently.

METHOD

Design and Sample

This study used a quantitative approach with a quasi-experimental design, specifically the pretest–posttest control group design. This design was selected because the research involved two intact classes that could not be randomly assigned. It allowed the researcher to examine the causal influence of the storytelling method and picture media on students' speaking skills. In this design, the experimental group received instruction through storytelling supported by picture media, while the control group received conventional teaching without

visual aids or storytelling activities. Both groups completed a pretest to determine their initial speaking ability and a posttest to measure improvement after the intervention.

The population consisted of all fifth-grade students at SDN 5 Tanrutedong in the 2025 academic year, totaling 30 students. Because the population was small, total sampling was used, and all students were included as participants. They were divided into two groups: 15 students in the experimental group and 15 students in the control group. Both groups were comparable in age, learning experiences, and academic background, making the comparison between treatments valid. The study involved two independent variables storytelling method (X1) and picture media (X2) and one dependent variable, speaking skills (Y). Storytelling referred to oral narration supported by modeling and guided retelling, while picture media consisted of visual materials such as picture series and story cards. Speaking skills were defined as students' ability to express ideas orally in terms of pronunciation, fluency, vocabulary, grammatical structure, intonation, and clarity.

Instrument and Procedures

Data were collected using a speaking performance test, observation sheets, and questionnaires. The speaking test was the main instrument and was administered before and after the intervention. A rubric scored pronunciation, fluency, vocabulary accuracy, grammatical structure, and communicative clarity on a scale of 1 to 5. Observation sheets were used during class activities to record student participation, responsiveness, and attentiveness. The questionnaire gathered students' perceptions of the storytelling method and picture media. All instruments underwent content validity checking through expert judgment from two language education specialists. Reliability testing using Cronbach's Alpha in SPSS ensured that each instrument produced consistent results.

The data collection procedures followed several stages. First, both groups were given a pretest to measure their initial speaking levels. Then, the intervention was carried out over six meetings. The experimental group was taught using the storytelling method integrated with picture media. Activities included vocabulary introduction, presentation of picture sequences, teacher modeling of storytelling, group discussions, and student retelling. Students focused on story elements such as characters, settings, sequences of events, and messages. Meanwhile, the control group received conventional instruction using textbook explanations and basic oral exercises without stories or pictures. Observations were conducted throughout the process to document engagement. At the end of the intervention, both groups completed a posttest to measure improvement in speaking skills.

Data Analysis

The data from the pretests and posttests were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics, including mean scores, standard

deviations, and frequency distributions, summarized students' speaking performance in each group. Inferential statistics were used to determine whether the treatments produced significant effects. Normality testing using the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test, multicollinearity testing, and heteroscedasticity testing were conducted to ensure that the data met the assumptions for regression analysis. Multiple linear regression was used to examine both the individual and combined influence of storytelling and picture media on speaking skills. t-tests measured the contribution of each independent variable separately, while the F-test assessed their simultaneous effect. The coefficient of determination (R^2) was calculated to determine how much of the variation in speaking skills could be explained by the two independent variables. Ethical considerations were maintained throughout the study, including obtaining permission from the school, informing students about the purpose of the research, maintaining confidentiality, and ensuring that the control group received additional storytelling-based learning after the study.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The results of the study are presented based on the analysis of students' speaking scores in both the experimental group and the control group. Prior to the treatment, a pretest was administered to determine the students' initial speaking abilities. The descriptive analysis indicated that the experimental and control groups had relatively similar starting points, with the mean pretest scores showing no substantial difference. This similarity suggests that both groups possessed comparable speaking skill levels before the intervention, which supports the validity of the subsequent comparison after the treatment.

In the experimental group, the pretest mean score was categorized as “sufficient,” reflecting that many students still struggled with fluency, pronunciation, and the ability to construct coherent sentences. Only a small percentage were able to demonstrate well-organized speech or appropriate intonation. This baseline data aligns with preliminary observations indicating that students had limited opportunities to practice speaking using innovative strategies prior to the research intervention.

After the application of the storytelling method supported by picture media over several sessions, the posttest results of the experimental group showed a significant improvement. The mean posttest score increased notably compared to the pretest, and many students progressed from the “sufficient” category to the “good” and “very good” categories. These improvements were particularly evident in aspects such as fluency, vocabulary choice, intonation, and structured sentence production. In contrast, the control group, which received conventional instruction, also showed a slight improvement between the pretest and posttest. However, the increase was considerably smaller compared to the experimental group. Students in the control group continued to demonstrate challenges in maintaining fluency and organizing their speech. Most of them remained within the “sufficient” category, suggesting that conventional teaching methods produced limited progress in speaking skills.

Inferential statistical analysis using the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test confirmed that the data were normally distributed, meeting the requirements for further regression and hypothesis testing. The results of the multiple regression analysis indicated that the storytelling method (X1) had a significant positive effect on speaking skills, with a strong coefficient value that demonstrated its influence on improving verbal expression.

Similarly, the analysis showed that picture media (X2) also had a positive and significant effect on students' speaking ability. Students who used picture series during the learning activities demonstrated better organization of ideas and more coherent oral expression compared to those who learned without such visual aids. The coefficient for X2 supported the conclusion that picture media contributed meaningfully to students' improvement.

The simultaneous influence of storytelling and picture media was tested using the F-test, and the results revealed a significant combined effect on speaking skills. The coefficient of determination (R^2) indicated that more than half of the variance in students' speaking performance could be explained by the two independent variables. This suggests that storytelling and picture media work most effectively when applied together, producing complementary effects on students' oral communication abilities.

The results demonstrate that the storytelling method and picture media both individually and jointly contribute to significant improvements in students' speaking skills. Students exposed to these methods became more confident, expressive, and structured in their speech. The findings confirm the initial hypotheses and provide empirical evidence supporting the integration of narrative-based and visual learning strategies in elementary language instruction.

The findings of this study show that storytelling is an effective method for developing speaking skills among elementary school students. This result is consistent with recent studies reporting that storytelling promotes active verbal engagement and strengthens students' ability to structure their ideas (Isbell, 2020; Al-Mansour & Al-Shorman, 2021). Through story retelling, learners practice organizing events in sequence, selecting appropriate vocabulary, and expressing ideas more confidently. The significant improvement observed in the experimental group supports the view that storytelling provides a meaningful and supportive context for oral language production, which is essential for young learners' speaking development (Putra & Sari, 2019).

The enhancement in speaking skills also reflects the interactive nature of storytelling. Throughout the intervention, students were required to listen carefully, understand characters, and interpret story events before retelling them. This process activated multiple cognitive and linguistic abilities including comprehension, memory recall, and language formulation which are known to contribute to oral fluency (Ismail, 2022). Such cognitively engaging tasks are seldom present in

conventional instruction, which may explain why the control group showed only minimal improvement. As noted by Andayani (2021), traditional methods often lack opportunities for meaningful oral practice, resulting in limited gains in speaking performance.

The positive effect of picture media further indicates that visual aids play an important role in helping students organize thoughts and construct coherent narratives. Visual supports such as picture sequences served as concrete guides for understanding storylines, thus reducing the cognitive load of generating ideas from memory alone. This finding aligns with recent applications of Dual Coding Theory, which state that combining visual and verbal information increases recall and improves language performance (Cho & Lim, 2017; Nurhayati, 2020). Additionally, the use of picture media lowered anxiety and hesitation among students who previously struggled with speaking tasks. Studies such as Wahyuni and Febriyanti (2021) report similar results, showing that visuals help learners produce smoother and more coherent speech by providing idea cues and supporting narrative flow. In this study, picture prompts enabled students to improve fluency and coherence two key components of effective speaking performance—demonstrating the essential role of visuals in language instruction for young learners.

The combined influence of storytelling and picture media produced the strongest improvement in students' speaking skills. This synergy emerges because storytelling offers a communicative purpose, while picture media supply cognitive scaffolding that guides idea formation and sequencing. Recent findings highlight that integrating narrative and visual elements fosters creativity, motivation, and confidence in oral expression (Dewi & Putri, 2023; Fitriana, 2020). This holistic approach encourages students to participate more actively and confidently in speaking activities. In contrast, the minimal improvement in the control group shows the limitations of traditional methods such as lecturing or drill-based exercises. As emphasized by Hidayat (2022), such methods do not provide sufficient opportunities for learners to practice speaking in meaningful contexts, resulting in low confidence and weak oral performance. These results underscore the need for more innovative and engaging strategies in Indonesian classrooms.

The findings of this study have practical implications for teaching. Incorporating storytelling activities and picture-based tasks can enhance speaking instruction by giving students repeated, enjoyable opportunities to produce oral language. These approaches also align with the principles of *Kurikulum Merdeka*, which emphasize student-centered learning, creativity, and communicative competence. Overall, this study confirms that storytelling and picture media significantly enhance speaking skills among fifth-grade students, and their combined use is particularly effective. These findings contribute to recent literature advocating innovative instructional strategies and provide practical guidance for improving speaking outcomes in elementary education.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that both the storytelling method and picture media have a significant and positive influence on the speaking skills of fifth-grade students at SDN 5 Tanrutedong. Students who were taught using these methods demonstrated substantial improvements in key aspects of speaking, including fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary use, sentence organization, and overall clarity. The results show that storytelling provides a meaningful and enjoyable context for oral expression, while picture media offer visual scaffolding that helps students organize their thoughts more effectively. The study further concludes that the combination of storytelling and picture media yields the greatest enhancement in speaking performance. When used together, these two strategies provide complementary benefits: storytelling encourages creativity and verbal engagement, whereas picture media support comprehension and narrative structure. This integrated approach fosters a learning environment that is interactive, motivating, and conducive to active participation. In contrast, conventional instructional methods showed only minimal improvement in students' speaking abilities, underscoring the need for more innovative teaching practices. Overall, the results of this research provide strong evidence that incorporating storytelling and picture media into language instruction can significantly improve students' oral communication skills. These findings offer valuable insights for teachers, curriculum developers, and educational policymakers seeking to enhance speaking instruction in elementary schools. It is recommended that educators adopt these strategies regularly to create more dynamic and effective learning experiences that support students' linguistic and cognitive development.

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