# THE EFFECT OF LIFE-STORY-RETELLING TECHNIQUE ON STUDENTS' SPEAKING FLUENCY

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Abstract: Second or foreign language learners often get difficulty in speaking fluency, which can be called as disfluency. Disfluency can be caused by some problems such as difficult task and lack of practice. Retelling a life story is one of the activities in teaching speaking which can be used by teachers in the EFL classroom. This study aims to find out the effectiveness of using Students' Life Story by retelling technique in improving speaking fluency. The research design used in this study was Pre-Experimental Research with a quantitative approach. This study was conducted in three meetings. As the instruments, the researchers used the test which was pre-test and post-test. The population of this research is all the students in the 1st grade of Senior High School 3 Lumajang and the researchers took one class of the 1st grade of Senior High School Lumajang to collect the data by using probability sampling. The subjects of this study were 36 students of X Science 6 class at Senior High School 3 Lumajang. This research used pre-experimental research design with quantitative approach by using pre-test and post-test and also the scoring guidance for the assessment to collect the data. The result of this research showed that life-story-retelling technique can help the students in improving their speaking fluency. This study was considered successful when there was a significant result between students' score in pre-test and post-test. Thus, it can be concluded that life-story-retelling technique successfully improved the students' speaking fluency.

Keywords: Speaking Fluency, Students' Life Story, Retelling Technique

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## INTRODUCTION

Fluency becomes a significant problem that needs to be overcome in learning a language especially as a second language or foreign language. According to Stockdale (2009), fluency in speaking can be described as the natural ability to speak quickly, fast, smoothly, spontaneously, and comprehensively with a small number of

errors that can distract the speaker to convey meaning for the listener. In addition, Stockdale (2009) also states that fluency occurs when someone can speak like a native speaker and there were a small number of silent pauses, filled pauses such as 'mmm, uh', false starts, hesitation, and self-corrections (p. 1). Therefore, a very good second language or foreign language learner is someone who is able to speak like the native speaker of the language, because speaking is an important skill for the learners.

Speaking can help them to develop their comprehension about the concept what they want to say and what meaning they want to convey, develop their vocabulary, and learn how to spell the words correctly. Speaking is an important skill in English which also has many types. There are six types of speaking skills: imitative, intensive, responsive, transactional, interpersonal, and extensive (Brown, 2007). Moreover, there are also five components which influence speaking skills. Syafei and Intan (2017) states that speaking ability is the way of students in producing language naturally through the use of vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, fluency, and accuracy to achieve communicative competence. An effective oral communication can be seen from people's ability to use language appropriately which involves not only verbal communication but also paralinguistic elements of speech such as intonation, pitch, and stress in their social interaction (Richards & Renandya, 2002).

Meanwhile, sometimes a listener cannot understand what the speaker said and also the message cannot be conveyed automatically, where misunderstanding and miscommunication happens. That's because of the speaker's lack of ideas about what they want to talk. One of the causes of those problems is fluency or it can be called disfluency. According to Nation and Newton in Mairi (2016), this type of disfluency can be caused by four problems faced by the learners when learning a language especially in English (p. 161-171). The first problem is difficult tasks and lack of practice, so they keep thinking that all of the materials are difficult. The second problem is not meaning focus tasks that may lead them to lack self-confidence or nervousness. The third problem is lack of practice time and the last problem is lack of planning or preparation in every speaking practice which influences students' readiness. When students cannot speak fluently, the message will have less meaning and cannot be well conveyed. The students may be confused about what vocabulary that they are going to use, and how to use grammar correctly. There are some activities in teaching speaking which can be used by the teacher in the EFL classroom, such as speech, debate, storytelling, and others (Ismi & Syafei, 2018).

Storytelling is an activity which recalls and retells past stories that have been experienced. Story/narrative/tale included in literary text type which means a series of related events of human experiences that occur in the past which comes from human creativity. According to Anderson (2006), narrative is such a piece of text that has a purpose to entertain or inform the readers or listeners related to the certain story. The series of events in the story depends on what the writer or speaker tells about and usually the climax happens in the middle of the story.

Retelling comes from the root "re-tell", the word "tell" comes after the word beginning "re" which means "again". Kissner in Erlidawati (2015) states that retelling is an activity to explain the main idea of a text, and it's a powerful classroom tool to build student's comprehension. Searfoss and Readence (1994) also states that story retelling is a good way for ESL students to develop their

performance. Here, students are required to speak up more, regarding what they have read and then expressing their real understanding about it.

Retelling can be in the oral form or written one and it can increase students' comprehension because it provides a view of quality of the story, quantity, and how they organize some information they constructed during listening and remembering their own stories. According to Reutzel and Cooter (2007), oral retelling allows the student to use vocabulary that they are familiar with, and it is accessible for them because it is not limited by their writing abilities. Oral retelling can make the students focus on the story that they want to tell rather than the writing. Besides, written retelling asks the students to reflect more deeply than with the oral one, so the students can revise and expand their responses in written retelling (Reutzel & Cooter, 2007). Retelling is natural for students, especially for an EFL student because it will create a positive result, such as for language development in speaking skills as one of the components of the way to communicate.

According to Domingo (2015), students were more exposed to spoken English rather than written English, but they need to consult different sources proportionally and use the reference appropriately to the aim of their writing and it needs more time to do because they will present in the two forms, written and spoken. In addition, Domingo (2015) also states that, in retelling something, they also need literacy of people because they are retelling something that is not based on their experience. Meanwhile, (Fitri *et al.*, 2017) in their research to the second grade students of MTsN Kuta Baro Aceh Besar stated that teacher may use 'video' as a media to do the retelling activity but, in the real condition the students need a teacher's help because they have some difficulties when retelling the story. In addition, according to Ismi and Syafei (2018), there is a problem from the use of story in Senior High School students; it can be a boring story or imitating a video's story. It can make other students feel lazy and do other activities such as sleeping instead of listening others story. Hence, these previous researchers above suggest conducting a similar study, but with different types of genres.

Hence, the researchers decided to make the students just focus on oral speaking skill and change the types of genres to become 'Students Life Story' because it does not ask students to read/need literacy of people because they are experienced by themselves and it can be improved. Furthermore, students can share and express their ideas freely based on their imagination, so they will be motivated to take part actively during the teaching and learning process. The important thing is, students can develop their vocabulary because by using *Students' Life Story*, students can use any words that are familiar to them and they can achieve the components of speaking such as the use of vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation in one activity. But the teacher should choose the topic for each meeting to make it interesting such as 'The happiest story you have experienced'.

According to the explanation above, due to the results obtained from the previous studies regarding the use of story in retelling activity (Domingo, 2015; Fitri *et al.*, 2017; Ismi & Syafei, 2018), the researchers hope that the use of life-story-retelling technique can really improve students' speaking fluency and achieve the goals of teaching and learning process. By seeking these gaps, this study aims to find out whether there is any significant effect of life-story-retelling technique on students' speaking fluency or not. This study is guided by the following research question:

Does life-story-retelling technique have a significant effect on students' speaking fluency?

# RESEARCH METHOD Subjects

This research was conducted by using a pre-experimental research with quantitative approach at the 1<sup>st</sup> grade of Senior High School 3 Lumajang because at least they have learned about past tense and narrative text which is the matters to retell their own life story so the teacher just recalls students' understanding about that.

## **Design and Procedures**

This research used pre-experimental research design by using pre-test and post-test because the researchers want to establish possible cause and effect between dependent and independent variables in one group only. The independent variable in this study is the use of students' life story by retelling technique in teaching and learning process, while the dependent variable in this study is the students' mastery of speaking or students' speaking fluency which is indicated by students' score.

However, in this pre-test we need to see how well they perform the particular skill, and in post-test we need to see the improvement after the treatment given. Pretest is given before students get the material or without any preparation to measure the dependent variable. Meanwhile, post-test is given to measure the dependent variable in the same way to know students' achievement after they taught about the material and something that they should prepare. The material is retelling a story with speaking skills as the topic. Moreover, the researchers also create a parameter to measure students' score of speaking skill such as; pronunciation, intonation, fluency, and accuracy with some criteria to get the score of students' speaking skill (cf: Appendix). These two scores from pre-test and post-test will be calculated to know the percentage and it was compared by using statistics as an indicator or measurement of the level of significance to know if the result of this study is good or bad.

Table 1. The test illustration of one group pre-test and post-test design

Pre-test Independent Variable		Post-test	
	(Treatment)		
$Y_1$	X	$Y_2$	

#### **Data Collection and Data Analysis**

The researchers are intended to describe the effectiveness of students' life story toward speaking fluency for the 1<sup>st</sup> grade students of Senior High School 3 Lumajang by comparing between students' score before being taught by using students' life story and after being taught by using students' life story. The students' performance in the pre-test and post-test was assessed by the researchers by using scoring rubric adapted from Maira Dewi (*iRubric: Speaking Fluency Activities Rubric*) and also blueprint which has been validated by an expert validator (cf: Appendix). The population of this research is all the students in the 1<sup>st</sup> grade of Senior High School 3 Lumajang. The 1<sup>st</sup> grade of Senior High School 3 Lumajang consists of 10 classes, 6

classes of science and 4 classes of social studies with the total of 264 students. In this study, the researchers took one class of the 1<sup>st</sup> grade of Senior High School Lumajang to collect the data by using probability sampling. The sample in this research is the students of X Science 6 in Senior High School 3 Lumajang which consists of 36 students.

The procedures of pre-experimental design used one group pre-test and post-test design applied in this research, there are:

- 1. The researchers should administer a pre-test before applying *Students' Life Story* with a purpose to see how well the students at the 1<sup>st</sup> grade of Senior High School 3 Lumajang perform their speaking skill.
- 2. The researchers need to apply a treatment in teaching speaking by using *Students' Life Story* to the subject in the 1<sup>st</sup> grade of Senior High School 3 Lumajang with a purpose to improve students' speaking skill (fluency).
- 3. The researchers need to administer a post-test after applying *Students' Life Story* by using retelling technique to see the improvement of students' speaking fluency.
- 4. The researchers need to calculate the percentage of students who passed the minimum standard score (KKM) and compare the scores of pre-test and post-test by using SPSS with paired sample t-test. The researchers need to get students' scores both from pre-test and post-test to know the hypothesis testing. The first step that the researchers should do is performing the normality and homogeneity tests as requirements for the use of independent sample t-test. After that, the researchers calculating the mean score of the subject by using a t-test with 0.05 (5%) as the level of significance. Then, the researchers computing the hypothesis significantly and to know whether the null hypothesis (H0) is accepted or not.

#### FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### **Findings**

## The Implementation of Students Life Story

The research was conducted in one group only at X Science 6 class of Senior High School 3 Lumajang. The researchers implemented *Students' Life Story* with pre-experimental research by using pre-test and post-test that has been done in three weeks where the English subject is only held 1 time in a week due to this pandemic Covid-19 which makes students have shifts for their school schedule. There were online classes and face to face classes. The class consists of 36 students with 24 girls and 12 boys.

The researchers used the lesson plan from the teacher and it was implemented for 3 meetings. The researchers also developed the materials which focused on understanding the narrative text and recount text in the form of *Students' Life Story* that supported teaching and learning process. In the first meeting, the researchers conducted a pre-test for students to retell a narrative text in the face-to-face class. Because there were some students who had not performed in the first meeting, the researchers continued the pre-test on the next meeting conducted in an online class. In the third meeting, the researchers conducted a post-test for students to retell a recount text which is *Students' Life Story* as a treatment in this research. The researchers made note of the students' performance while assessing students' performance by using a scoring rubric which has been validated by an expert.

#### The Result of Oral Speaking Test (Pre-test and Post-test)

Oral speaking test was held in three meetings by giving pre-test and post-test. The test was retelling a short story of narrative text in the two meetings as the pre-test and retelling a recount text which is *Students' Life Story* in one last meeting. The researchers asked each student to perform in front of the class for face to face class while the online class adjusted themselves remembering that the students had shifts on their school schedule due to pandemic Covid-19 which made them divided into online class and face to face class alternately. Although the students presented their story, the researchers took the students' speaking scores individually.

After collecting the students' scores, the researchers counted the students who passed the minimum standard score (KKM), which is 70. There were only 2 (two) students who passed the minimum standard score from pre-test. From the result of the post-test, there were 11 students who passed the minimum standard score. After having the post-test result score, the researchers analyzed the data, by highlighting the students who passed the minimum standard score (KKM) and then calculated the percentage of the students' score.

The following figures are showing the result of the students' achievement in the speaking test from the pre-test to the post-test.

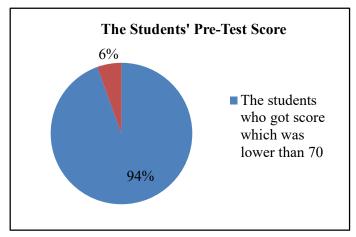


Figure 1. The students' pre-test score

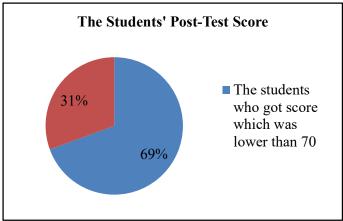


Figure 2. The students' post-test score

The figures above showed the result of pre-test in the preliminary study was only 5.56% or 6% of students who passed the minimum standard score and 30.56% or 31% of students passed the minimum standard score of post-test in this current study.

Table 2. One-sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov test

rable 2. One-sample Ronnogorov-Simmov test				
		Unstandardiz		
		ed Residual		
N		25		
Normal Parameters <sup>a,b</sup>	Mean	.0000000		
	Std.	7.19585429		
	Deviation			
Most Extreme	Absolute	.130		
Differences	Positive	.130		
	Negative	094		
Test Statistic		.130		
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.200 <sup>c,d</sup>		

Based on the output above, it can be known that the Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) is 0.200 which is higher than 0.05. According to the basis of decision making in the Kolmogrov-Smirnov normality test, it can be concluded that the data are normally distributed. Thus, the assumptions or requirements for normality in the regression model have been fulfilled.

Table 3. Test of homogeneity of variance

		Levene			
		Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Hasil	Based on Mean	.002	1	57	.968
Belajar	Based on Median	.013	1	57	.911
Siswa	Based on Median and	.013	1	55.606	.911
	with adjusted df				
	Based on trimmed	.044	1	57	.834
	mean				

Based on the output above, it can be known that significance (Sig) value Based on Mean is 0.968 > 0.05, so it can be concluded that the data variants of pre-test and post-test is homogeny.

**Table 4. Paired samples T-test** 

-		N	Correlation	Sig.
Pair 1	Pretest &	2:	5 .497	.012
	Posttest			

The output above shows the results of the improvement between the two data or the improvement between the pre-test and post-test variables. Based on the output above, it can be known that the correlation coefficient value is 0.497 with a significance value (Sig.) is 0.012. Because of the Sig. 0.012 < 0.05, it can be said that there is a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test variables. Thus, it

can be said that the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted.

#### **DISCUSSION**

Students' Life Story is one strategy that can be used to teach speaking. Students' Life Story closed to real life context that students experienced by themselves which brings them to the interesting activity. This section presents the discussion of the research findings toward the implementation of Students Life Story to improve the students' speaking fluency.

#### The Students' Participation during Implementation of *Life Story*

According to the conducted study, it can be stated that the implementation of retelling technique brings positive impact for both teacher and students. First, by using retelling technique, students can enjoy the learning process because they can reflect their problems in speaking skills, so the students can improve and develop their skills. In addition, Morrow (2015) argued that retelling is another active procedure that can help to build comprehension in oral skills. Thus, it can be a valuable assessment tool which can help them to identify student's problems in particular skills and retelling can also make it easier for both the speaker and listener to understand the content orally.

On the other hand, by using *Students' Life Story*, the students can contribute to class by taking part actively through social experience during the teaching and learning process. This is supported by Dujmovic (2006) who proved that personal stories can give many effective benefits for social and emotional development because their stories can help them to know themselves and to know others. So, the students can build up their confidence and relationship between speaker and listener. *Students' Life Story* can also stimulate students to talk which makes them become challenged and motivated to speak English. Syafei and Ismi (2018) argue that the use of life story can enlarge their opportunity to speak English through the story that they produced and created by themselves.

Furthermore, *Students' Life Story* brings advantages such as contributing the students to class by sharing and expressing their ideas based on their imagination about the experience that has merged with their own life story. It is supported by Miller (2011) who proved that one's story can connect elements in one's own self, life, and experience because it gives one the wholeness and it can add up something. In addition, it can also increase others' responsibility when a student is retelling their own life story. The listeners can express and react according to what stories they have heard. Miller (2011) adds that the listeners may project themselves into the characters of the story, may imitate and feel empathy with the characters through the use of the listener's imagination.

In conclusion, retelling technique can help both teacher and students to achieve the goals of teaching and learning process because they can reflect and identify the problems in speaking skills. Besides, the use of *Students Life Story* brings advantages such as contributing to class by taking part actively during the teaching and learning process through social experience, so it can build up their confidence and relationship between speaker and listener. The other advantages are students can enlarge their opportunity to speak, contribute to class by sharing and expressing their

ideas based on their imagination, and it can also increase others' responsibility when a student is retelling their own life story.

## The Improvement of the Students' Speaking Fluency

As found in the research findings, in retelling a story, students can repair their speaking disfluency and they can deliver the content of the story freely without being afraid to make mistakes. This is supported by Gibson et al. (2003) who stated that story retelling will help students to understand the story, not only what the readers and listeners remember because it requires them to incorporate and reconstruct parts of the story. In addition, Thornbury (2000) also stated that the focus of fluency activities was on the message, not on the form. By that, the students have achieved the goal of speaking fluency.

The achievement of students' speaking fluency is also revealed by the significant improvement from the pre-test and post-test result. In the pre-test which used preliminary study by using narrative text to retell the short story, the students had low speaking achievement. The pre-test result showed only 6% of the students passed the minimum standard score, while the post-test result showed 31% of the students passed the minimum standard score which is 70.

Moreover, *Students' Life Story* also helps the students to explore their vocabulary which is familiar for them and make the students understand what they want to talk about easily. Students can also achieve their speaking ability because the components of speaking are already fulfilled. This is in line with Syafei and Ismi (2018) who stated that, in students' performance, teachers can see the accuracy of components of speaking such as the use of vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation. In addition, *Students' Life Story* helps the students in gaining ideas to compose and retell stories orally. They could create the story based on their own creativity and imagination as what they have experienced before. Inayah (2015) adds that, the storyteller is able to share their own experiences and they can inspire and motivate others through the use of personal storytelling.

Meanwhile, it's different with the use of narrative text as the preliminary study used in the pre-test. The students were confused about what they wanted to talk about during the test. This is in line with Zuhriyah (2017) who stated that the students always asked about the vocabulary and the pronunciation of the words that they did not know to the lecturer. That's because the students were not familiar with the vocabulary in the text. Even the story is familiar enough for the students because the students are depending on the text. Kayi (2006) argues that the goal of teaching speaking is not just to ask the students to repeat and memorize something, but it should improve students' communication skills because they can express themselves in that way.

In conclusion, in post-test the students were easier to express their ideas based on their own creativity and imagination than pre-test. This is because in retelling the narrative text, most students were reading the text and they are depending on the text, so they cannot explore their ideas by using their own words to retell the story. Thus, the students can achieve the goal of speaking fluency in post-test rather than pre-test.

### CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTION

From this conducted research that has been done about the use of life-storyretelling technique to improve speaking fluency at the first grade of Senior High School 3 Lumajang in the academic year of 2020/2021, the researchers conclude that life-story retelling technique works effectively and has a positive effect on the students' achievement in speaking skills. It is proven by the results of the percentage of students' score in post-test and the result of students' improvement with a significant value.

By using life-story-retelling technique, it can give solutions for students who have difficulty which can be caused by many factors such as the students' interest on the topic and the students' mastery of vocabulary. In addition, it can be used as an alternative choice in learning speaking because it can increase students' ability in speaking. Furthermore, applying life-story-retelling technique can make students explore their ideas by using their own vocabulary so they know what they want to talk about. Thus, it can be concluded that life-story-retelling technique has a significant effect on students' speaking fluency.

It will be better to add one more meeting (on the second meeting) with a purpose to apply the treatment because there should be any teaching activities in this pre-experimental research. Besides, adding one or more meetings will help the researchers to get more valid data. However, because of shortage of time and due to pandemic Covid-19 which makes students have their own shift for school schedules every week, the researchers have consulted with the curriculum teacher for not doing the research in a long time. Thus, the researchers and the curriculum teacher agreed that the research can be conducted in three meetings, so it will not interfere with the semester program.

Due to the delimitation of the study, the researchers put some suggestions to the following parties that are:

#### 1. The Students

The researchers hope that the students can increase their ability in speaking because this is a simple strategy which can be used for speaking activities. The students need to practice more by retelling something with the topic that they already know to explore their ideas, thoughts, opinions, and also to improve their speaking fluency.

## 2. The Teacher

For the teacher, it's hoped that this research can encourage them to consider a better strategy in teaching speaking to improve the students' speaking fluency because it can make the teaching and learning process not only well structured but also exciting and fun. Besides, the researchers suggest that the teacher should apply a tool such as 'reward' to engage their motivation to speak, so the students can perform their story as well with the rules given by the teacher.

#### 3. Other Researchers

For other researchers, the researchers hope that this strategy can be applied to different levels of students. It is suggested that the other researcher may conduct the research in two different groups to know the significant result of the strategy and the implementation should be in the face to face situation to know students' performance of the strategy used.

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