

The Effectiveness of Story-Based Learning in Enhancing Speaking Confidence of Fifth-Grade Students in Elementary Schools: A Literature Review

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Abstract

This study aims to examine the effectiveness of story-based learning in enhancing the speaking confidence of fifth-grade elementary school students through a literature review. The main research question addressed is how story-based learning influences students' speaking confidence and what strategies contribute to its success. This study employed a qualitative literature review method by analyzing relevant empirical studies on storytelling, paired storytelling, hand puppets, digital storytelling, and public speaking classes. The findings consistently indicate significant improvements in students' speaking skills and self-confidence, as evidenced by increased post-test scores, strong statistical significance ($p < 0.05$), and positive behavioral changes such as greater courage, fluency, and expressiveness. The review concludes that story-based learning is an effective and comprehensive pedagogical strategy for fostering speaking confidence and active classroom participation among fifth-grade students.

Keywords: story-based learning; speaking confidence; storytelling; elementary students; literature review



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INTRODUCTION

Speaking skills are an important oral language skill for students, especially at the elementary school level. These skills not only cover linguistic aspects, but are also closely related to affective aspects such as self-confidence, courage, and public speaking skills. Empirically, many elementary school students still experience difficulties in speaking in front of the class due to low self-confidence, shyness, fear of making mistakes, and reluctance to appear alone in front of their friends. This problem hinders language skills that should be developed early on, thus creating challenges in the language learning process related to students' expression and communication skills.

Story-based learning (storytelling) has become one of the pedagogical strategies believed to be effective in developing various aspects of students' abilities, including speaking skills and self-confidence. Storytelling provides a meaningful and interesting language context, as well as authentic communication situations, which can trigger students' interest and active participation in learning activities. In several studies, storytelling techniques have been proven to stimulate students' creativity, expand their vocabulary, and improve their overall oral communication skills.

The results of the study also show that storytelling can significantly increase students' self-confidence. In a study conducted by Sufartianingsih & Gawarti (2024), the use of storytelling was proven to be effective in building the confidence of elementary school students when speaking in front of the class, as seen from the significant increase in pre-test and post-test scores after the application of this method. In line with this, other studies reveal that storytelling can create a more comfortable and engaging learning atmosphere, so that students feel more prepared and confident to speak actively.

In addition, the implementation of story-based learning in the context of language teaching also shows a positive impact on students' language skills. Wang and Luo (2025) found that story-based learning methods in English teaching can increase students' interest in learning and their language skills in general, despite challenges such as selecting appropriate story material. Other studies have also found a positive relationship between storytelling methods and improvements in elementary school students' speaking skills and class engagement, where stories are used as a tool to encourage active participation.

Curriculum changes in education emphasize the importance of 21st-century skills, such as effective communication, collaboration, and creativity, all of which can be supported through meaningful learning approaches such as storytelling. Thus, story-based learning not only provides a lively language context but also contributes to character development and prepares students to communicate effectively in everyday life.

Based on this background, this research is important as a form of literature review to understand the effectiveness of story-based learning in increasing the speaking confidence of fifth-grade elementary school students. This study is expected to provide a comprehensive overview of: How story-based learning affects students' confidence in speaking, Strategies and best practices in applying the storytelling method in the classroom, Obstacles encountered and benefits derived from this method.

Thus, this study not only strengthens the theoretical foundation but also provides practical recommendations for teachers and education policymakers to improve the quality of speaking learning in elementary schools.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs a qualitative approach with a literature review method to synthesize existing research findings regarding the effectiveness, strategies, and challenges of implementing story-based learning for fifth-grade students. The research procedure is

conducted systematically through four main stages: identification, selection, analysis, and drawing conclusions.

The data utilized in this study consist of secondary data obtained from reputable scientific journal articles published between 2023 and 2025. Data collection techniques were carried out by searching academic databases such as Google Scholar using specific keywords: "storytelling method," "speaking confidence," "elementary school students," and "digital storytelling".

The data analysis phase was performed using the content analysis technique, where findings from relevant literature—such as the use of hand puppets, paired storytelling models, and digital innovations—were critically compared and categorized. As stated by Yunelda et al. (2025), the use of the literature study method allows researchers to map the success patterns of certain strategies and evaluate how stories can be used as effective instruments to encourage active participation and improve students' average learning outcomes. These analytical results were then synthesized to produce practical recommendations for curriculum development and teaching practices in fifth-grade elementary school classrooms.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Based on the analysis of various articles that have been reviewed, story-based learning shows consistent effectiveness in improving elementary school students' speaking skills and confidence. Research by Fhadila Auwlya et al. On the effectiveness of the storytelling method at SDN 28 Cakranegara proves that this method has a very high level of effectiveness, as indicated by a significance value of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$), with a t-count value greater than the t-table and an effect size of 1.50, which is classified as very large. These findings confirm that storytelling is not only an alternative strategy but also a learning approach that has a strong impact on improving students' speaking skills.

This effectiveness was further reinforced by research on the use of hand puppets based on fables among fifth-grade students at SDN Inpres Yotefa. The results of the study showed an increase in the average speaking skill score from 63.2 (pretest) to 81.6 (posttest) with a significance of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$). The improvement occurred in all aspects of assessment, namely fluency, vocabulary, and expression and intonation. In addition to improving technical aspects of speaking, the use of hand puppets also created an interesting learning atmosphere and encouraged students to be more confident in expressing their ideas orally. Theoretically, hand puppets function as a transitional medium that helps students reduce their psychological burden when speaking, so that they feel more comfortable and courageous.

A literature review on the storytelling method in Indonesian language learning also showed similar findings. Storytelling, both in traditional and media-based forms, has been proven to improve average learning outcomes, mastery, and student confidence in speaking in class. The Paired Storytelling model, for example, has been reported to improve speaking skills while strengthening social interaction and student confidence through a collaborative and supportive learning atmosphere. This approach places students as active subjects who learn through dialogue and cooperation, rather than merely receiving information.

In addition to concrete media such as hand puppets, digital storytelling innovations have also shown significant effectiveness. A review of various studies reveals that the use of digital storytelling improves students' speaking skills, engagement, motivation, and collaboration in learning. The significant difference between the experimental and control groups in the use of digital storytelling confirms that the integration of technology can enrich the learning experience and improve students' speaking skills in a tangible way. Thus, storytelling in digital format can be an innovative alternative that is relevant to the learning needs of the 21st century.

From a psychological perspective, story-based learning also has an impact on building courage to perform and reducing anxiety when speaking. Research on Public Speaking Class

in fifth-grade students shows that 83% of students dare to perform in front of the class and experience improvements in expression, intonation, and body gestures. The study also confirms that storytelling contributes significantly to increasing courage and confidence in speaking in front of an audience. These findings are relevant to the initial condition of students who generally still feel shy and lack confidence when asked to speak in front of the class.

Overall, the results of the literature review show that story-based learning is effective in increasing the speaking confidence of fifth-grade elementary school students through various approaches, including conventional storytelling, paired storytelling, the use of hand puppets, and digital storytelling. This effectiveness is evident from the increase in academic scores, strong statistical significance, and changes in students' attitudes, who became more courageous, expressive, and active in the learning process. Thus, story-based learning can be recommended as a comprehensive pedagogical strategy to develop speaking skills while building the confidence of elementary school students in a sustainable manner.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the synthesis of various research findings, it can be concluded that story-based learning is a transformative pedagogical tool that bridges the gap between linguistic competence and affective development in fifth-grade students. The "golden thread" of this study reveals that the effectiveness of storytelling lies in its ability to reduce psychological barriers—such as anxiety and lack of confidence—by providing a safe, imaginative space for verbal expression. Whether through traditional media like hand puppets or modern digital storytelling, this method shifts the student's role from a passive listener to an active communicator, which is the core requirement of 21st-century education.

The practical implication of this study suggests that speaking instruction in elementary schools should no longer focus solely on technical fluency but must prioritize the creation of a supportive communicative atmosphere. For educators and policymakers, it is recommended to integrate diverse storytelling formats into the Indonesian language and English curricula to foster sustainable public speaking courage. Ultimately, mastering storytelling at the elementary level serves as a foundational character-building block, preparing students to become expressive, collaborative, and confident individuals in their future social and academic lives.

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