Contextual Storytelling for English Speaking with Local Wisdom: A Development Study

Muhammad Hassan[1], Donny Adiatmana Ginting[2], Fernando De Napoli[3], Rosmen[4]
[1,2,34]English Education, Sekolah Tinggi Keguruan dan Ilmu Pendidikan Al Maksum, Langkat, Sumatera Utara
Corresponding E-Mail: muhammadhasan@stkipalmaksum.ac.id

Abstract

This research aims to explore the effectiveness of contextual storytelling in enhancing English speaking skills among students, with a particular focus on incorporating local wisdom from North Sumatra. The study was conducted with English Education students at STKIP Al Maksum, specifically targeting second-semester students across two classes. The research employed a developmental approach, using a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods. The participants engaged in storytelling activities based on local wisdom, integrating both digital storytelling tools and traditional narratives to improve their speaking abilities. Data were collected through pre- and post-tests, student feedback surveys, and observations. The results demonstrated significant improvement in students' fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary usage, and coherence in English speaking. Additionally, students showed a deeper connection to their cultural heritage and reported increased confidence in sharing local stories in English. The integration of digital tools, such as video and audio recordings, proved highly effective in enhancing student engagement and creativity. Overall, the findings suggest that the contextual storytelling model, rooted in local wisdom, is an innovative and effective method for improving students' English-speaking skills while fostering cultural awareness. This study contributes valuable insights to the field of English language teaching by demonstrating the positive impact of incorporating local culture and digital storytelling in language learning.

Keywords: *Contextual Storytelling; Digital Storytelling; English Speaking Skills; Local Wisdom; Language Learning*

Introduction

In the evolving landscape of English language education, speaking proficiency remains a pivotal skill, especially within English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts like Indonesia. Despite its importance, many learners struggle to achieve

fluency due to limited exposure to authentic language use and culturally relevant materials (Hassan, 2023). To address these challenges, educators are increasingly adopting Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) approaches, which situate learning within meaningful, real-life contexts. CTL emphasizes the connection between academic content and students' daily experiences, enhancing engagement and comprehension. Within this framework, storytelling emerges as a powerful pedagogical tool. It not only fosters language development but also allows learners (Johnson & Golombek, 2020). To express personal and cultural narratives, thereby deepening their linguistic and cultural competence (Isbell et al., 2004).

Integrating local wisdom into storytelling further enriches this approach. Local wisdom encompasses the values, traditions, and knowledge inherent in a community, offering culturally resonant content that can make language learning more relatable and impactful (Hassan et al., 2022). Recent studies have demonstrated that incorporating local stories into English instruction can significantly enhance students' speaking skills and cultural awareness (Zaim et al., 2020).

At STKIP Al Maksum, previous research has explored innovative methods to improve speaking proficiency. For instance, Hassan et al. (2021) examined the effectiveness of English camp programs in enhancing public speaking skills, finding notable improvements in student performance. Similarly, Hassan and colleagues (2022) investigated the impact of communicative activities on speaking abilities, highlighting the benefits of interactive and culturally grounded teaching strategies (Eko & Putranto, 2019).

Building upon these insights, the current study aims to develop and implement a contextual storytelling approach that integrates local wisdom to enhance English speaking skills among 4th-semester students in the English Education Program at STKIP Al Maksum. By focusing on culturally relevant narratives, the study seeks to provide learners with meaningful content that reflects their heritage and experiences, thereby fostering greater engagement and linguistic competence (TEMA 11, 2018).

This research adopts a Research and Development (R&D) methodology, following the ADDIE model (Analyze, Design, Develop, Implement, Evaluate), to systematically design and assess the effectiveness of the contextual storytelling approach. The study involves two classes of 4th-semester students, providing a comprehensive evaluation of the method's impact on speaking proficiency. By integrating contextual storytelling and local wisdom into English language instruction, this study aims to contribute to the development of culturally responsive teaching practices that not only improve speaking skills but also promote cultural appreciation and identity among learners (Zhang & Zou, 2020).

The findings are expected to offer valuable insights for educators seeking to enhance language instruction through innovative and culturally grounded methodologies. Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) is an instructional

approach that connects academic content to real-world situations, making learning more meaningful for students. Johnson (2002) emphasizes that CTL encourages students to relate their learning to their personal, social, and cultural contexts, thereby enhancing engagement and comprehension (Sukardari, 2019).

Recent studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of CTL in improving English speaking skills. Annisa (2018) conducted an experimental study in a vocational high school in Lhokseumawe, Aceh, comparing CTL with conventional teaching methods. The findings revealed that students taught using CTL achieved significantly higher speaking scores than those taught through traditional methods, particularly in aspects of fluency and comprehensibility. Similarly, Widodo (2020) found that CTL was more effective than the audio-lingual method in enhancing students' speaking abilities, with the experimental group outperforming the control group in speaking assessments (Astalini et al., 2019).

Yusyac, Muslem, and Yasin (2020) further support these findings, demonstrating that CTL significantly improves students' speaking skills in terms of accuracy, clarity, and fluency. Their study employed a pre-experimental design with pre-test and post-test measures, showing substantial gains in students' speaking performance after the implementation of CTL strategies. Storytelling is a powerful pedagogical tool that facilitates language acquisition by engaging learners in meaningful communication. It allows students to practice language structures, vocabulary, and pronunciation within authentic and culturally relevant contexts (Mudana et al., n.d.).

Kurniati (2016) explored the use of fairy tales embedded with local wisdom in teaching English speaking to elementary and high school students. The study highlighted that storytelling not only improved students' speaking skills but also instilled moral values and cultural awareness. Similarly, Mulyanti, Hakim, and Wati (2023) implemented the "Localish Program," which utilized storytelling activities to enhance English speaking skills and impart local wisdom values among elementary school children. The program resulted in improved speaking abilities and a deeper understanding of cultural heritage.

Incorporating local wisdom into English language teaching enriches the learning experience by making it more relevant and culturally responsive. Local wisdom encompasses the values, beliefs, and practices inherent in the local culture and community. In the context of Indonesia, integrating local wisdom into English language instruction helps preserve cultural heritage while enhancing learners' motivation and identity development (Yusuf et al., 2022).

Sartini (2004) defines local wisdom as a collection of knowledge, skills, and practices that are deeply rooted in a community's tradition and daily life. These values provide not only moral guidance but also a meaningful context for language learning. Zuchdi, Prasetyo, and Masruri (2011) argue that local wisdom plays a vital role in character education and that its incorporation in teaching can promote national identity and social responsibility among students (SHEILA MARIA BELGIS

PUTRI AFFIZA, 2022).

Method

In this section, we will discuss the methodology used to develop and evaluate the Contextual Storytelling for English Speaking with Local Wisdom model. This study follows a Research and Development (R&D) approach, utilizing the ADDIE model (Analyze, Design, Develop, Implement, and Evaluate) to create, validate, and assess the effectiveness of the instructional materials and activities.

Research Design

This study is a developmental study aimed at producing a contextual storytelling method tailored to the needs of English language learners. The study focuses on fourth-semester English Education students at STKIP Al Maksum. These students were selected because they are at an intermediate stage in their language learning and are actively preparing to become future English teachers. The R&D approach ensures that the instructional materials are not only theoretically grounded but also practical and applicable to real classroom settings.

The study involves two groups of fourth-semester students, who will participate in classroom-based interventions across two semesters. This approach allows for an in-depth exploration of how contextual storytelling based on local wisdom can be integrated into speaking lessons to enhance students' speaking skills and cultural awareness.

1. **Analyze Phase**

The first phase of the ADDIE model, Analyze, focuses on identifying the learners' needs and understanding the learning environment. A needs analysis was conducted using surveys and interviews with students and lecturers. The purpose was to understand the students' current speaking abilities, challenges, and preferences in learning, particularly in the context of using local wisdom in storytelling. This analysis also helped identify the cultural elements that would be most relevant for incorporating into the storytelling activities. Data from the needs analysis were used to determine the key themes for the storytelling materials, which would reflect local wisdom and provide an engaging and contextually relevant experience for students.

2. **Design Phase**

In the Design phase, based on the findings from the need's analysis, the instructional materials were designed. The key components of the design include, local wisdom Integration, stories, legends, and cultural narratives from North Sumatra were selected to be used as the basis for the storytelling activities. These stories were chosen for their relevance to students' daily lives and their potential to enhance cultural awareness. Speaking Skills Focus: Activities were designed to

help students develop various aspects of speaking, including fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary, and confidence.

The activities include storytelling, role-playing, and group discussions based on local wisdom. Multimedia use, given the increasing role of technology in education, digital storytelling tools were incorporated to allow students to create multimedia stories. This included audio recordings, video creation, and the use of images or visuals relevant to the local wisdom theme. Assessment tools, to evaluate the effectiveness of the intervention, assessment rubrics were developed, focusing on criteria such as fluency, coherence, pronunciation, and engagement in the storytelling process.

3. Develop Phase

In the Develop phase, the designed materials and activities were created and refined. A digital storytelling platform was selected for students to present their stories. This platform included features such as video recording, editing tools, and the ability to add music and visuals, allowing students to present their stories in a more engaging way. A storytelling guidebook was also created, providing students with clear instructions on how to craft and perform their stories. This guidebook included templates for structuring their stories, tips for effective speaking, and examples of local wisdom-based stories that students could use as inspiration.

A pilot test of the materials was conducted with a small group of students to ensure that the activities and resources were practical and aligned with the students' needs. Feedback from this pilot group was collected to refine the materials further.

4. Implement Phase

The Implement phase focuses on putting the developed materials and activities into practice. In this study, the intervention will be implemented in two classes of fourth-semester English Education students at STKIP Al Maksum. The classes will engage in eight-week storytelling sessions, with each week focusing on different aspects of speaking and storytelling.

5. Evaluate Phase

The final phase, Evaluate, focuses on assessing the effectiveness of the storytelling approach in improving students' speaking skills and cultural awareness. A combination of formative and summative evaluations will be conducted to gather data on the intervention's success. Formative evaluation will be done through continuous observation and feedback during the implementation of the activities. Peer assessments and self-reflections will also be used to monitor individual progress. Pre- and post-tests on students' speaking abilities, with a focus on fluency, coherence, pronunciation, and vocabulary. Teacher and student feedback surveys to assess satisfaction with the materials and activities.

Expert validation of the storytelling materials to ensure that they are both pedagogically sound and culturally appropriate. The evaluation will help refine the instructional model and contribute to the development of a comprehensive framework for using contextual storytelling in English language teaching, particularly in the context of North Sumatra.

Data Analysis

Data collected from the need's analysis, pilot test, pre- and post-tests, and feedback surveys will be analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative methods. Descriptive statistics will be used to analyze the pre- and post-test results, while thematic analysis will be applied to qualitative data such as feedback from students and teachers. The combination of these approaches will provide a comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness of the contextual storytelling model.

Results

In this section, the findings of the study will be presented, focusing on the effectiveness of the Contextual Storytelling for English Speaking with Local Wisdom model in enhancing students' speaking skills and cultural awareness. The results are derived from a combination of pre- and post-tests, student feedback surveys, and observations collected throughout the implementation of the storytelling activities. The data will be analyzed and discussed, with tables included to provide a clear comparison of the findings.

1. Improvement in Speaking Skills

The primary objective of this study was to assess the improvement in students' speaking skills after participating in the contextual storytelling activities. The pre-test and post-test scores of students' speaking performances were analyzed to determine any significant changes. As shown in Table 1, there was a notable improvement in the four key areas of speaking: fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary usage, and coherence.

Table 1. Pre- and Post-Test Results of Speaking Skills

Speaking Test	Pre-Test Mean Score	Post-Test Mean Score
Fluency	3.4	4.5
Pronunciation	3.1	4.2
Vocabulary	3.3	4.4
Coherence	3.2	4.3

As shown in the table, fluency increased by 1.1 points, from a pre-test mean score of 3.4 to 4.5 in the post-test. This indicates that students were able to speak more smoothly and confidently in English after engaging in the storytelling activities. Likewise, pronunciation and vocabulary usage both improved by 1.1

points, reflecting an increase in students' ability to use language effectively and accurately. The coherence score also showed a significant improvement, indicating that students were able to organize their ideas more logically and fluently.

These results suggest that the Contextual Storytelling for English Speaking with Local Wisdom model was successful in improving students' speaking abilities, particularly in terms of fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary, and coherence.

2. Cultural Awareness and Engagement

In addition to enhancing speaking skills, another key aim of the intervention was to increase students' cultural awareness through the use of local wisdom in storytelling. To assess this, students were surveyed before and after the intervention to gauge their perceptions of the connection between storytelling and local culture. The results from the post-intervention survey, shown in Table 2, reflect a significant increase in students' cultural awareness and engagement.

Table 2. Student Feedback on Cultural Awareness and Engagement

Statement	Agree (%)	Strongly Agree (%)
"The storytelling activities helped me connect with my local culture."	60	35
"I feel more confident sharing local stories in English."	70	30
"The stories helped me understand the importance of local wisdom in language."	65	25

As seen in Table 2, a large percentage of students (95%) agreed or strongly agreed that the storytelling activities helped them connect with their local culture. This suggests that the use of local wisdom-based stories was not only engaging but also instrumental in fostering a stronger cultural connection. Additionally, 70% of students reported feeling more confident in sharing local stories in English, indicating that the integration of local content facilitated their language learning and encouraged greater self-expression in the target language. Furthermore, 65% of students indicated that the stories helped them understand the importance of local wisdom in language.

This finding highlights that the integration of local stories into the curriculum contributed to students' appreciation of their cultural heritage, helping them realize the value of preserving and sharing cultural narratives.

3. Engagement with Digital Storytelling Tools

The use of digital storytelling tools was another significant component of the intervention. Students had the opportunity to use digital media, such as video, audio, and images, to create their stories. The effectiveness of these tools was assessed through feedback from the students, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Student Feedback on Digital Storytelling Tools

Tool	Useful (%)	Very Useful (%)
Video Recording Audio	60	40
Recording Visuals and	55	45
	65	35
Images	63	37
Overall Digital Tools		

As shown in Table 3, the majority of students found the video recording (60%) and audio recording (55%) tools useful or very useful for creating their digital stories. Visuals and images were also highly valued, with 65% of students indicating that they were useful or very useful. This indicates that students found the integration of digital tools engaging and helpful in creating more dynamic and creative storytelling presentations. Overall, 63% of students felt that the digital tools used in the intervention were effective in supporting their storytelling and language development.

4. Student Participation and Feedback

In terms of participation, most students were actively involved in the storytelling activities. Throughout the intervention, students worked in groups to prepare and present their stories, which fostered collaboration and peer feedback. The students were also encouraged to provide feedback to their peers, promoting a supportive and interactive learning environment.

The qualitative feedback from students indicated that they enjoyed the process of creating and sharing their stories. Many students expressed that they felt more confident speaking English when they were able to connect their stories with their cultural heritage. They appreciated the opportunity to engage with local wisdom in a meaningful way while practicing English, which added an element of relevance to the language learning process.

5. Challenges and Limitations

While the intervention yielded positive results, several challenges were noted. One of the main challenges was the time constraint. Due to the limited class hours, some students felt they did not have enough time to fully develop their stories or rehearse their presentations. Future implementations of this approach could benefit from a longer time frame, allowing students more time to refine their storytelling and speaking skills.

Nimas Ulfatuz Zahro Maro, Januarius Mujiyanto, Puji Astuti
Examining the Impact of Emancipated Curriculum on EFL Teachers' Creativity in Lesson
Planning and Teaching Practice at Vocational High School, Semarang Regency, Central Java

Another challenge was related to the technical skills required for digital storytelling. Some students struggled with using video editing tools or recording audio, which impacted the quality of their final projects. Providing additional training or more intuitive tools for digital storytelling may help address these issues in future studies. The positive feedback on digital storytelling tools also underscores the potential of technology to make language learning more interactive and engaging. By combining local culture with innovative teaching methods, this study contributes to the growing body of research on the effectiveness of contextualized and digital storytelling approaches in language education.

Discussion

In this section, the results of the Contextual Storytelling for English Speaking with Local Wisdom model will be analyzed and discussed, focusing on the key findings, their implications for language learning, and how the results align with existing research. The discussion will also explore the effectiveness of the model in improving students' speaking skills, cultural awareness, and engagement, based on the data gathered during the intervention.

1. Improvement in Speaking Skills

The primary goal of the intervention was to enhance students' speaking skills through contextual storytelling using local wisdom. The pre- and post-test results provide valuable insight into the effectiveness of the approach. As shown in Table 1, there was a significant improvement in students' speaking fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary usage, and coherence. The improvement in pronunciation and vocabulary indicates that the local wisdom stories provided students with opportunities to use new words and practice articulation. Coherence, or the ability to logically structure speech, also improved, which reflects the effectiveness of using stories as a tool to enhance both language proficiency and storytelling skills.

2. Cultural Awareness and Engagement Skills

One of the secondary goals of the study was to foster a deeper understanding and appreciation of local culture through the use of local wisdom in storytelling. The incorporation of North Sumatran folktales and traditions allowed students to explore their cultural heritage while practicing English. The first statement in the survey asked students whether the storytelling activities helped them connect with their local culture. A combined 95% of students either agreed (60%) or strongly agreed (35%) with this statement. This suggests that the use of local wisdom-based stories was not only an effective tool for language learning but also a powerful means of fostering a deeper connection to students' cultural heritage. By incorporating familiar stories and traditions into the storytelling activities,

students were able to see the relevance of their cultural identity within the context of English language learning. The integration of local content in the lessons likely helped students appreciate the role of their culture in the language learning process, making the activities more meaningful and engaging.

The second statement focused on whether students felt more confident sharing local stories in English. Here, 70% of students agreed, while 30% strongly agreed with this statement. This demonstrates that the storytelling activities contributed significantly to improving students' self-confidence in speaking English. The process of retelling local stories in English provided students with an opportunity to practice language in a context they were familiar with, which likely made them feel more at ease and confident in using English for personal expression. By translating and sharing their cultural narratives, students were able to practice speaking while reinforcing their cultural pride, which also positively impacted their confidence.

The third statement asked students whether the stories helped them understand the importance of local wisdom in language. A total of 90% of students either agreed (65%) or strongly agreed (25%) with this statement. This indicates that the integration of local wisdom in storytelling not only helped students improve their language skills but also deepened their understanding of the significance of preserving and sharing cultural knowledge through language. Students recognized that language is not only a tool for communication but also a vehicle for transmitting cultural values, traditions, and knowledge. The emphasis on local wisdom helped them see the connection between language learning and cultural heritage, thereby enhancing their appreciation of both.

Conclusion

The results from the survey underscore the effectiveness of contextual storytelling in promoting cultural awareness and engagement in language learning. The vast majority of students reported that the activities helped them connect with their local culture, build confidence in speaking English, and understand the value of local wisdom in language use. These findings suggest that incorporating culturally relevant content into language learning can enhance students' engagement, boost their confidence, and provide a deeper understanding of the role of language in preserving cultural traditions.

To enhance the effectiveness of Contextual Storytelling for English Speaking with Local Wisdom, several improvements are suggested. First, expanding training on digital storytelling tools, such as video and audio editing, would enable students to create more engaging and polished stories. Extending the time allocated for storytelling activities is also recommended to allow students ample opportunity to refine their stories and practice their speaking skills.

Additionally, incorporating peer collaboration and feedback could foster a more supportive learning environment and encourage greater engagement. Expanding the range of local wisdom stories from different regions would enrich students' cultural knowledge and deepen their understanding of diverse storytelling traditions. Continuous monitoring and feedback throughout the course, as well as conducting follow-up studies to assess the long-term impact, will ensure the activities remain effective and adaptable. Finally, integrating storytelling more broadly into the English language curriculum could offer students a holistic approach to language learning, reinforcing both their cultural identity and language skills. These improvements would further maximize the potential of storytelling to enhance students' speaking abilities and cultural awareness.

References

Astalini, Darmaji, Kurniawan, W., Anwar, K., & Kurniawan, D. A. (2019). Effectiveness of using e-modules and e-assessments. International Journal of Interactive Mobile Technologies, 13(9), 21–39. https://doi.org/10.3991/ijim.v13i09.11016

Eko, B. S., & Putranto, H. (2019). The Role of Intercultural Competence and Local Wisdom in Building Intercultural and Interreligious Tolerance. Journal of Intercultural Communication Research, 48(4), 341–369. https://doi.org/10.1080/17475759.2019.1639535

Hassan, M. (2023). The STKIP Al Maksum English Education Linguistics and Literature Journal Speaking 3': Innovative of Contextual Method in English Language Teaching for Speaking. 1, 1–8.

Hassan, M., Suprayetno, E., Ginting, D. A., Napoli, F. De, & Rosmen, R. (2022). A plan for students' independent study of blended learning in the English Department of STKIP Al Maksum. International Journal of Advances in Social and Economics, 4(2), 44–49. https://doi.org/10.33122/ijase.v4i2.232

Husnaini, H. (2025). Navigating challenges and strategies in implementing the Independent Curriculum: A multi-site case study of English language instruction in junior and senior high schools in Palopo. Linguistics Initiative, 5(1), 178-190.

Husnaini, H., & Sompa, S. R. (2025, June). USING SPEECHWAY APPLICATION TO INCREASE STUDENTS'SPEAKING SKILLS IN ENGLISH EDUCATION DEPARTMENT AT IAIN PALOPO. In Proceedings of The Third International Conference on English Language Education.

Johnson, K. E., & Golombek, P. R. (2020). Informing and transforming language teacher education pedagogy. Language Teaching Research, 24(1), 116–127. https://doi.org/10.1177/1362168818777539

Mudana, G., Pedalangan, J., & Pertunjukan, F. S. (n.d.). PENGETAHUAN LOKAL DALAM EPISTEMOLOGI RELASIONAL: KAJIAN FILSAFAT KEBUDAYAAN.

Masruddin, M., & Munawir, A. (2021). the Efficacy of Treasure Hunt Game with

Luwu Local Culture Based in Teaching English Vocabulary and Introducing Cultures Heritages of Luwu At Smpit Al Hafidz Kota Palopo. Kongres Internasional Masyarakat Linguistik Indonesia, 204-208.

Masruddin, Hartina, S., Arifin, M. A., & Langaji, A. (2024). Flipped learning: facilitating student engagement through repeated instruction and direct feedback. Cogent Education, 11(1), 2412500.

SHEILA MARIA BELGIS PUTRI AFFIZA. (2022). No Title: הכי קשה לראות את מה שבאמת לנגד העינים. הארץ, 8.5.2017, 2003–2005.

Sukardari, D. D. H. (2019). Model Pendidikan Inklusi Dalam Pembelajaran Anak Berkebutuhan Khusus. In Kanwa Publisher. https://ejournal.umpri.ac.id/index.php/JGP/article/view/1326

TEMA 11. (2018). No 主観的健康感を中心とした在宅高齢者における 健康関連指標に関する共分散構造分析 Title. Journal of Materials Processing Technology, 1(1), 1‒8. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.cirp.2016.06.001%0A http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.powtec.2016.12.055%0A https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijfatigue.2019.02.006%0A https://doi.org/10.1016/j.matlet.2019.04.024%0A https://doi.org/10.1016/j.matlet.2019.127252%0A http://dx.doi.o

Yusuf, Y. Q., Aziz, Z. A., Menalisa, & Zulfikar, T. (2022). The Dynamics of Language Attitudes of Young Parents towards the Preservation of the Mother Tongue. Language, Discourse and Society, 10(1), 26–42.

Zaim, M., Refnaldi, & Arsyad, S. (2020). Authentic assessment for speaking skills: Problem and solution for English secondary school teachers in Indonesia. International Journal of Instruction, 13(3), 587–604. https://doi.org/10.29333/iji.2020.13340a

Zhang, R., & Zou, D. (2020). Types, purposes, and effectiveness of state-of-the-art technologies for second and foreign language learning. Computer Assisted Language Learning, 0(0), 1–47. https://doi.org/10.1080/09588221.2020.1744666