Enhancing Speaking Skills through Storytelling: Perspectives of ESL Teachers from Northern Sindh

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Abstract

This qualitative study investigates the effectiveness of using storytelling as an educational strategy to improve spoken English abilities among secondary ESL students. The research, which was conducted in a Government High School in Sukkur, Sindh, Pakistan, used semi-structured interviews with seven ESL teachers to gather ideas directly from practitioners. The findings indicate that storytelling has a favorable impact on students. Through the storytelling approach students' engagement increases, and they improve their vocabulary and fluency in the English language. Furthermore, students gain speaking confidence and better pronunciation. Limited resources, access to storytelling resources, and difficulty managing overcrowded classes were the most identified challenges by the teachers. The study's recommendations include resource distribution, class size control, and teacher professional development. The study adds significantly to literature by emphasizing the practical benefits of storytelling in ESL instruction, delivering context-specific insights, and making targeted recommendations for creating a successful learning environment.

Keywords: Storytelling, ESL Education, Spoken English Skills, Language Learning Challenges, Professional Development.

Introduction

Good command of English spoken skills plays a crucial role in students' overall academic success. In Pakistan, 75% of higher education is obtained in the English language during the teaching-learning process. English spoken skills are required for higher education as most of the students are supposed to communicate in English throughout their academia such as giving presentations, involving in classroom discussions, emailing and interviews, etc. Furthermore, English is the language of technology and the internet so having English skills assists students to make the most of the internet for their studies. subsequently, Good English language skills open gateways for students to study or work in foreign, especially in English-speaking countries. However, most of the students in Pakistan lack English oral communication skills because they are not provided a platform and situated context to speak the English language (Ali, 2020). So, if the youth of Pakistan lack English oral communication skills, they are going face hindrances in obtaining higher education, studying abroad, starting up bigger trade, or getting the most out of technology. Moreover, students tend to score less in academia, they are unlikely to participate in classroom discussions, and they suffer while public speaking, giving presentations, or showing queries in the classroom. In the context of Pakistan, EFL students are limited to reading, small talk, grammar structures, and vocabulary from textbooks, therefore they have less background knowledge of the English spoken language (Ali, 2020). So, the major reasons behind the lack of spoken skills of EFL students in Pakistan are the Lack of a situated environment (a placement of authentic learning situation) to practice the oral skills of the English language, and Fewer opportunities to use spoken English beyond the classroom (Ali, 2020). To enhance oral communication in EFL students only reading textbooks and solving textbook exercises are not sufficient. In addition, sociocultural studies claim speaking is a higher mental function that develops through social interactions and practice that can help to internalize the use of the language (Yen, 2013).

Therefore, this study started a deep look into the important part of storytelling from the varied points of view of teachers in Northern Sindh, with the specific goal of improving the speaking abilities of English as a Second Language (ESL) students. The study chose storytelling as a potential ESL pedagogy and wants to explore how the current teachers in the Northern Sindh city of Sukkur are seeing it as an effective teaching strategy to improve students' spoken skills. (Gurung, 2020). This study is based on the data from interviews of in-

service ESL teachers in a public high school in Sukkur to find out how important storytelling techniques are as a teaching tool for improving the speaking skills of ESL students.

The main point of this study is also to recognize the problems that English as a Second Language (ESL) students in Northern Sindh face while using storytelling strategies. At the heart of this investigation was storytelling, an age-old and universal human activity that is strongly rooted in the region's rich oral tradition (Gurung, 2020). As teachers learn more about different languages and cultures, they realize that stories can be used to make learning more fun and interactive. Our study used a qualitative research approach and semi-structured interviews. It helped us understand the many sides of teachers' thoughts on using storytelling techniques in the classroom and how those techniques affect the speaking skills of ESL students.

Research Objectives

1. To explore the impact of story-telling as a teaching strategy in improving the speaking skills of students in Northern Sindh from, the perspective of ESL teachers.
2. To understand the problems in using Storytelling strategies that English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers in Northern Sindh face when they are trying to teach spoken English.

Research Questions

1. What are the perspectives of English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers on using storytelling techniques to improve students' speaking skills?
2. What challenges do English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers face while using storytelling techniques?

Research Significance

This exploratory project aimed not only to identify challenges confronting ESL teachers but also to investigate positive outcomes of using storytelling as an ESL teaching technique for improving students' spoken skills. This inquiry revolved around the role of storytelling, which is profoundly rooted in the region's oral heritage. By analyzing instructors' perspectives, the study hopes to uncover successful tactics, illuminate obstacles, and highlight effective ways to use storytelling as a teaching tool.

The research is significant because it connects academic concepts with practical applications, providing a culturally sensitive method for developing speaking skills. By concentrating on teachers' perspectives, this study establishes the framework for methodological advances in

ESL instruction in Northern Sindh. While acknowledging potential shortcomings, the study strives for honesty and completeness in determining the complex relationship between storytelling and English language learning in this unique cultural setting.

Literature review

The Importance of Speaking Skills for ESL Learners

In today's world, English plays an important part in global education. English language ability is essential for meeting global community standards. As a result, people prefer to study English to communicate effectively and compete on a national and international scale to get social empowerment (Hur and Suh, 2012). In developing nations such as Pakistan, pupils with good English language fluency are more likely to be admitted to higher education, whilst those with lower proficiency are denied such possibilities (Nawab, 2012). Despite the importance of the English language in today's world, Pakistani students have few opportunities to communicate in English. In Pakistan, there are two formal educational systems: public Urdu medium schools and private English medium institutions. Both of these systems teach English as a second language. Students receive no exposure to speaking and hearing English since teachers and students prefer to engage in their original language. Several pieces of evidence show that English is learned solely to pass exams, with minimal emphasis on speaking and listening abilities (Ali Mansoor *et al.*, 2022). Based on my own experiences, teachers are under pressure to complete the course, which causes them to pay little or no attention to developing students' language abilities. Traditional language education methods in the classroom prioritize reading and writing skills over speaking abilities. Linguists also explain that there is no annual evaluation method for monitoring speaking and listening skill levels. As a result, teachers do not focus on speaking abilities, and children eventually display weak communication skills.

Factors Affecting Students' Speaking Skills

Several reasons impede the development of pupils' speaking skills in English language classes. According to previous research (Nawab, 2012), these factors include a lack of professionally trained language teachers, a memorization-based examination system, overcrowded classrooms, teachers' workload, a lack of continuous support, and teachers' discomfort with English language instruction (Burke and Hardware, 2015). To understand the causes of language classroom practices, Nawab (2012) conducted mixed-method research in Chitral, including classroom observations and teacher interviews. Although most research has focused on the practice of oral communication skills in English language classrooms, the precise remedy to this rising problem has yet to be addressed. Research undertaken in the

Korean setting shows that second language learners' anxiety and self-confidence have an impact on their oral performance (Park & Lee, 2005). Students improve linguistic skills, particularly speaking skills when provided opportunities to engage, express thoughts, discuss, and make remarks (Nawab, 2012). If students are given adequate time to practice speaking, storytelling can be an effective technique to develop speaking skills (Elhassan & Adam, 2017).

Akram and Mehmood (2007) demonstrated that students struggled due to a lack of vocabulary and grammatical illiteracy. Students are self-conscious because they assume that if they use poor English, their classmates will laugh. They also noted that youngsters attending English-medium schools are fluent in the language. Students who have attended an English-medium school can speak fluently, except for proper pronunciation and accents. According to Ali et al. (2020), English is taught as a topic rather than a language, which explains why pupils rely on rote memorization to pass the exam.

English speaking practice and interaction in the EFL learning environment.
Mostly in the context of Pakistan EFL students are limited to learning stories, small talks, grammar structures, and vocabulary from textbooks, therefore they have less background knowledge of the English spoken language (Ali, 2020). However, to enhance oral communication in EFL students only reading textbooks and solving textbook exercises are not sufficient. In addition, sociocultural studies claim speaking is a higher mental function that develops through social interactions and practice that can help to internalize the use of the language (Yen, 2013). For that reason, EFL learners should be facilitated with a communicative environment in which more opportunities can be provided to students to practice the spoken language (Hwang, 2015). Moreover, the EFL teachers should bring activities that provide students with a real setting (situated context) to practice daily-life English. As Huang and Chen (2015) suggested that "the surrounding learning context should be rich for language usage, and it should envelop students' lives daily". In addition, in an EFL classroom, students should be encouraged to interact and practice the language to produce appropriate language, because interaction helps students to exchange language knowledge among their classmates and with the teacher (Ahmad, 2021). According to Yen (2015), interactive speaking and listening are necessary for students' learning experience, therefore, during and after classroom time EFL students should have sufficient opportunities for their development of English spoken skills.

Storytelling to improve ESL students' speaking skills.

Storytelling is a teaching approach in which students interact with a storyteller and are asked to repeat stories using various word constructions. Telling stories is a warm and entertaining teaching strategy that may be pleasurable for both the teacher and the students who hear them. Because of the narrative, the learner was able to learn and apply the language constructively (Yang, 2011). No doubt, students have a lot to say and are constantly discussing their home, environment, pets, and likes and dislikes. When presented with a foreigner, they become uneasy. Storytelling is a unique method for introducing young kids to the exciting world of literature. It builds a reading habit that allows them to express their creativity through pictures (Ali Mansoor *et al.*, 2022). In this approach, students get the confidence and determination to come up with new ideas.

The simplest way to convert difficult and intricate issues into simple and teachable language is through storytelling. Joe Lambert first talked about the idea of digital storytelling at the Center for Digital Storytelling in California. Digital storytelling combines multimedia (like pictures, sounds, videos, and publishing on the web) with storytelling to improve spoken and written language and to tell stories to others online instead of speaking (Rahimi and Yadollahi, 2017). There are also computer-based narratives, interactive stories, electronic diaries, digital documentaries, and digital essays that are all used to mean the same thing. for telling stories online. You can say that digital storytelling is "sharing one's story through multiple mediums of imagery, text, voice, sound, music, video, and animation" (Rahimi and Yadollahi, 2017). People have said that digital storytelling is a new way to tell stories. The Digital Storytelling Association (2002) says that digital storytelling brings new life to old ways of sharing stories. People have been telling stories for a long time as a way to share their wisdom, values, and knowledge. New technologies have made it easier to show and watch stories on both film and computer screens. More than that, digital storytelling lets everyone share their own unique experiences with others and build a social community by sharing their tales (Gurung, 2020).

Several research has been undertaken on the use of storytelling to teach students English as a second language. Abdolmanafi-Rokni and Qarajeh (2014) did a study in Iran and found that digital storytelling aloud in English language training has a good influence on students' language skills. Another study, conducted in China on 59 grade 6 students, found that kids who used the system to create tales performed considerably better on the post-test than students who did not utilize it. Similarly, a large-scale study (N=5000) in Pakistan found that pupils taught through storytelling outperformed those taught through conventional methods

(Kim, 2014). An action research study of 20 students in Indonesia indicated that storytelling increases students' speaking skills and learning activities. In Indonesia, another study found that storytelling improved students' comprehension, fluency, vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation (Zuhriyah, 2017). According to one study conducted in Indonesia, implementing an interactive storytelling method improved EFL learners' speaking abilities and classroom activities (Fu et al., 2021). All of these studies show that learners made significant progress in speaking competence in terms of fluency and language use (Fu et al., 2021), demonstrated the positive effect of storytelling and answering questions on Telegram, and promoted a friendlier speaking learning environment for EFL learners (kin, 2014). Much of the study has been done outside of Pakistan; there are very few studies conducted in Pakistan, and the majority of them are for university students. There is a big divide at the school level, particularly in public sector schools. Students at public-sector schools have low speaking abilities and struggle to interact and communicate in English. In this study, the impact of storytelling on the speaking skills of grade 8 pupils was investigated. Although some research studies provide reasons to ignore the productive skill, i.e., oral communication skill, and the use of narrative to develop students' subject understanding individually, there is a lack of merging these two entities at the same time for the aim of enhancing speaking abilities. Previous studies can only be regarded as a first step toward a more comprehensive understanding of storytelling because it is primarily based on data collection through interviews, observations, and questionnaires, but empirical evidence is required by implementing it to improve learners' speaking skills. As a result, the current study seeks to investigate the impacts of storytelling on improving students' speaking skills, as well as the implementation of storytelling as a technique to improve the speaking skills of primary children in public schools (Burke and Hardware, 2015).

Research Methodology

The qualitative method was used to do this study. Qualitative research is a type of social action that looks at how people understand and make sense of their own experiences to learn about their social reality (Mohajan, 2018). It helps experts understand why society works the way it does. From the point of view of the people they study, qualitative researchers are also interested in what they believe, what they experience, and how they make sense of things (Mohajan, 2018).

Exploratory Design

This article is based on exploratory research design. This type of study is used to find out more about a problem. It doesn't solve the problem, though (Exploratory Research, 2021). When a researcher starts with a big idea, they use it to come up with specific questions that could lead to more study. When someone does exploratory research, they should keep an open mind and be ready to change the focus of their study as they learn more (Exploratory Research, 2021).

When you do exploratory research, you look into a problem that isn't well known, hasn't been looked into enough, or hasn't been defined clearly. This method, which is sometimes called grounded theory research or interpretive research, is not meant to come up with clear answers. Instead, it aims to find ideas that can be used as the basis for more specific research in the future.

Population, Sample, and Sampling

People who are part of this research study were ESL teachers working at a public high school in Sukkur District. There were about six elementary school teachers in the whole group. The selection method used to get the sample was called "purposive sampling," and it was used after the population was set. Purposive sampling, which is also called judgmental, selective, or subjective sampling, is a type of non-probability sampling in which researchers choose people from the public to take part in polls based on what they think (Campbell et al., 2020). Researchers must know the purpose of their studies before they use this survey sampling method to make sure they choose and contact the right people who are allowed to take part in the study. So, we involved teachers who have at least 2 years of experience as ESL teachers, are from government schools, are from Sukkur, and have some kind of professional certificate/training in the field. Purposive sampling is used when researchers want to reach a certain group of people because all poll participants were chosen because they fit a certain profile (Andrade, 2021).

Data Collection

ESL There were secondary school teachers who took part in this qualitative exploration study. Interviews with some frameworks were used to get the information. The above techniques were meant to help the researcher fully understand the teachers' points of view on how to use stories to help students improve their spoken English. It was very important to do in-depth interviews to get knowledge. In this case, the researcher made a semi-structured interview guide that fits the purpose of the study perfectly. Many free-form questions covered a wide range of subjects, including educational ideas, how to teach, issues teachers face when

using storytelling as an ESL method, and their thoughts on how to improve students' English-speaking skills in the classroom using storytelling strategies. A semi-structured style made it possible to explore new topics flexibly while also making sure that important topics of interest were looked at in an orderly way.
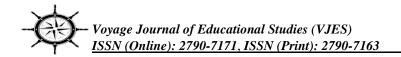
Each of the teachers who took part in the study was talked to alone. The researcher was able to learn more about each teacher's experiences and learn more about their unique points of view and ways of conducting storytelling sessions because these talks were one-on-one. The goal was to make available wealthy, detailed qualitative data that goes beyond simple numbers and covers all the little things that make teaching ESL in elementary school so interesting.

As soon as the information was gathered, all of the interview records were looked over in great detail. The main ideas, important findings, and trends that kept coming up were found through coding and thematic analysis. Steps were also taken to make the study more trustworthy. For example, members were checked out and information came from three different sources, which made the results truer and more trustworthy. Because of this, in-depth conversations were used to get a full picture of what ESL school teachers thought and did.

Data Analysis

The first step in the method for analyzing data was to carefully collect data by interviewing people and observing things (Chanda, 2021). For the interviews, a detailed plan was made with important questions and subjects. Before the interviews with the participants, they were checked to make sure they gave the right answers. It was then put up word-for-word so that it could be looked at more closely. The information was put together in a way that made sense after it was collected. It was easy to look over the interview notes again because they were carefully put together. The study that came after was organized because of this.

Before going on to the analysis stage, the researcher decided that thematic analysis was the best way to deal with the qualitative data. A coding system was made so that the data could be put into groups. The important parts of both the interview transcripts and the checklist data were given codes. The next step was to find themes that were found through this coding method. The data that had been coded were carefully looked over during the theme analysis step. The researcher carefully looked through the data to find ideas and problems that kept coming up. They were looking for trends, topics, and ideas that came up over and over again. The data was grouped by themes that showed what it was all about, and codes that were

linked to each theme were put together. As they worked, the researcher thought about what each theme meant and how it related to the question or goals of the study.

The next step was to share the data after the thematic analysis was done. That meant putting down the themes that were found and what they meant such as storytelling improved students speaking, students gained confidence, they frequently use new words while telling stories, and so on. That was all there was in the report; it had key parts of interview transcripts to back up the findings. In the story, it was talked about what the results mean for the study topic.

Making sure that the method worked was a big part of the research. The researcher asked peers or colleagues for feedback through a peer review method. Based on the helpful feedback, the researcher made changes to the work. It was also possible to "member check," which meant that the analysis was shown to other people to make sure the results were right. This made certain that the findings could be trusted. When the data processing was over, the most important results and what they meant were summed up. The researcher found a link between the data and the study's goals. This made the study's conclusion make sense.

We wanted to use the knowledge we've gained through our research with the help of key stakeholders. Because of this, researchers, practitioners, policymakers, and the public all must see our research as familiar and valid. Lincoln and Guba (1985) say that one way for researchers to convince themselves and others that their research findings are important is to show that they can be trusted (Nowell et al., 2017). Lincoln and Guba (1985) refined the concept of trustworthiness by introducing the criteria of Credibility: addresses the "fit" between respondents' views and the researcher's representation of them (Nowell et al., 2017) Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggested several techniques to address credibility including activities such as prolonged engagement, persistent observation, data collection triangulation, and researcher triangulation, transferability, Transferability refers to the generalizability of inquiry. In qualitative research, this concerns only case-to-case transfer (Nowell et al., 2017) dependability, to achieve dependability, researchers can ensure the research process is logical, traceable, and documented (Nowell et al., 2017) confirmability. According to Guba and Lincoln (1989), confirmability is established when credibility, transferability, and dependability are all achieved. Koch (1994) recommended researchers include markers such as the reasons for theoretical, methodological, and analytical choices throughout the entire study so that others can understand how and why decisions were made.

Findings

This section provides findings to answer the questions this study aims for. So, the first question of my study is 'What are the perspectives of English as a Second language (ESL) teachers on using storytelling techniques to improve students' speaking skills?' This question is answered through five main themes as follows.

Engagement and interest

Most English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers agreed that using stories in class has changed things for the better. The teachers stress that when stories are used, the students are more interested and engaged in learning. The classroom goes from being a typical language class to a place where students can enjoy English stories without feeling like they have to work hard at learning the language.

"Teaching English through stories has changed everything." The kids are much more interested in learning, and I can tell they are. When they're reading an English story, it's like they forget they're in a language class." (Aila)

"I used storytelling technique in my English class it helped students to practice English speaking as well as listening skills" (Rohan)

Vocabulary Acquisition

English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers say that telling stories is a natural and effective way for students to learn and remember new words. Students can use the new words they've learned in everyday talks with the help of contextualized learning. Teachers have noticed that this method works better than traditional word drills, making learning a language more fun and useful.

"Stories make it seem normal to learn new words. They remember what they heard, and I've seen kids use these words in normal conversation. Traditional word drills don't work nearly as well as this one." (Maria)

"I used to give students to memorize words meaning. Students were familiar with meanings, but they were unable to use them in everyday life but when they used them in stories in class, they learned them effectively." (Gohar)

Teachers see storytelling as a means to eliminate rote memorization and integrate speaking skills into language education. According to one teacher, the emphasis on memory in our school system leads to a lack of enthusiasm for speaking among students. There is no examination of students' speaking skills, therefore they are unmotivated to learn them. I believe I can fill this gap through narrative.

Culturally relevance

The teachers stress how important it is to choose stories that are culturally relevant to the students because they know how important they are. This not only makes the English language more accessible but also helps students connect their own experiences with the language. ESL teachers make learning more important and relevant by linking the lessons to their students' cultural backgrounds.

"It's important to choose stories that fit with our culture. It not only helps them understand English better, but it also connects what they know to the language. Putting two worlds together is like that." (Shahzen)

"I believe storytelling also helps students to learn English culture too which is quite good for learning collocation" (Yusra)

Confidence in Speaking:

Teachers say that using stories in their lessons has made a big difference in how confident their students are in speaking. Students can say what they want more easily when they talk about the characters and plots. This change from focusing only on grammar to a more communicative method has helped the students get better at language use in general.

"The change in how confident they are when they speak is amazing." They've become more expressive as we've talked about the personalities and the story. It's no longer just language; it's about how to talk to people" (Farhan)

Interactive Learning

When ESL teachers use stories in the classroom, they stress how involved they are. Students take an active role in debates, conversations, and even acting out scenes from the stories. This is different from traditional ways of teaching, where knowledge only goes from teacher to student. It makes the learning environment more dynamic and interesting.

"There are two ways to go with stories. Students take an involved role in debates, discussions, and even play-out scenes. It's nice to have something different from the usual "teacher talks, students listen" method" (Yusra)

The data states that kids have the opportunity to converse with one another, which results in the improvement of their communication skills. One of the positive characteristics of the observed instruction was that children get eager to recount the folktales to their friends and classmates, with less hesitancy and fear of making mistakes. While sharing their stories, they also shared their questions and responded to their classmates' queries, which gave them confidence and motivation to join in similar activities.

This section provides findings to answer the second research question of the current study. Which is "What challenges do English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers face while using storytelling techniques?" To answer this question the following themes have been identified through data.

Limited Resources

One problem that many ESL teachers have is that there aren't enough good training materials. Teachers say it's hard to keep up with the demand for interesting and diverse tools because they have to make their content. Because of this limitation, they can't offer a full and well-rounded language learning experience.

"To be honest, it's hard to find the right materials." There are times when we don't have enough tools to make the content we need, and it's hard to keep up with demand."

"Storytelling techniques many times require costumes, stationary, and visual aids but in government schools, the management does not facilitate this" (Mohan)

Overpopulated Classes

Having too many students in a class is a big problem for ESL teachers. When there are 40 or more students in a class, it's hard to give each one individual care. Some students who need more help have trouble getting the individualized help they need, which lowers the general effectiveness of spoken English instruction.

"It's hard to give each student individual care in a class of 40 or more. There are too many students in the class for everyone to get the help they need, and some students need extra help.

"When I make groups of students to narrate or perform a story the number of groups is a lot and we do not have much time to finish and maintain the flow of learning" (Rohan)

Linguistic Variation

It is known that the different languages spoken by students from different parts of the country are both beneficial and difficult. Even though it makes classes more culturally diverse, teachers find it hard to keep a standard English pronunciation because students speak different languages. This range of people makes teaching spoken English even more difficult.

"Our students come from a wide range of language backgrounds." This is both good and bad: it makes our classes more interesting, but it also brings in differences that make it hard to keep a standard English pronunciation. (Ali)

social Barriers

English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers find social barriers that make it hard for students to use English freely outside of school. Many students don't want to use English in daily

situations because it's not the norm. To get past this problem and make the classroom a more English-friendly place, teachers and the school system need to keep working at it.

"Students are afraid to speak English freely outside of school because it's not appropriate," Getting past this obstacle and making the place English-friendly is always a task" (Maria)

Conclusion and Discussion

Discussion

The findings emphasize the relevance of speaking abilities for ESL learners, highlighting their role in global education, social empowerment, and higher education access. The research also notes that in Pakistan, English is frequently studied for exams, with little emphasis on speaking and listening abilities (Ali Mansoor et al., 2022). Moreover, the study found that EFL students in Northern Sindh struggle to use English effectively in real-life circumstances. So, through storytelling strategies, ESL teachers think that students can have more opportunities to speak and will be in the process of situated learning. It is known that both public Urdu medium schools and private English medium institutions do not provide adequate exposure to spoken English. Moreover, management and curriculum make teachers focus more on reading and writing which gives fewer opportunities for students to practice English spoken skills. Also, school management forces teachers to cover the syllabus in time regardless of students' learning.

The literature review identifies several factors that impede the development of speaking skills. Such as a lack of trained language teachers, a memorization-based examination system, overcrowded classrooms, teacher workload, and discomfort with English language instruction (Ali et al., 2020). Similarly, the findings of the study highlight issues for ESL teachers teaching spoken English in Northern Sindh. Furthermore, participants anticipate that storytelling pedagogy should be gained through professional development pieces of training for ESL teachers. That includes insufficient resources, overcrowded classes, and social barriers. The difficulty in locating appropriate resources, over-classroom population, and overcoming social barriers are consistent with the literature's examination of factors influencing speaking skills.

The literature review emphasizes the value of storytelling in boosting speaking abilities. It highlights how storytelling allows students to express their creativity, gain confidence, and translate complicated subjects into understandable language. Digital storytelling is also emphasized as a modern strategy that uses multimedia aspects to improve language abilities (Rahimi & Yadollahi, 2017). Hence, our data also supports the literature by demonstrating that ESL teachers in Northern Sindh view storytelling as a useful strategy for improving students' speaking skills. Through storytelling techniques, students gain oral gain in vocabulary

acquisition, cultural relevance, and speaking confidence. This shows how storytelling improves the learning environment and student performance.

Conclusion

In summary, the study on ESL learning in Northern Sindh, Pakistan, is consistent with previous research on language education issues. The literature and study findings emphasize the importance of speaking abilities, the problems that ESL teachers confront, and the utility of storytelling. The identified challenges are insufficient resources, overcrowded classrooms, linguistic diversity, and social barriers. The study's emphasis on storytelling as an effective teaching tool is consistent with existing literature, which highlights its positive effects on language acquisition and confidence building.

This study has limitations such as the absence of student viewpoints because the focus is mostly on ESL teachers. Future researchers can increase its generality by combining ESL students' perspectives to reveal their experiences and obstacles when using storytelling for spoken English abilities. Furthermore, the study falls short of doing a thorough analysis of certain educational practices within storytelling that are most beneficial. Identifying and analyzing certain tactics or approaches would provide detailed insights for educators looking to employ comparable ways. Furthermore, the study briefly highlights digital storytelling but does not delve deeply into its possible impact on ESL learning, ignoring the expanding role of technology in education.
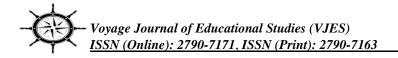
Recommendations and Contribution

In Northern Sindh, improving English language learning for EFL students requires several steps. Firstly, providing ESL teachers with diverse and culturally relevant materials will create an interactive learning atmosphere. Secondly, addressing overcrowded classes through smaller sizes or technology use can offer students more personalized attention. Ongoing professional development for ESL teachers is crucial for enhancing teaching methods and managing classrooms effectively. Additionally, integrating cultural aspects into learning materials and involving the community can break down social barriers to language use outside of class.

This study offers insights into challenges faced by ESL learners and provides tailored solutions, emphasizing the effectiveness of storytelling as a teaching tool and advocating a comprehensive approach to language instruction. The proposed ideas have broader implications for similar educational settings globally, aiming to enhance the overall English language learning experience by fostering an engaging, supportive, and culturally appropriate learning environment.

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