



تأثير حكاية القصص القصيرة على تطوير الإنتاج اللفظي للطلاب اليمنيين الدارسين للغة  
الانجليزية كلغة اجنبية

**The Impact of Short Storytelling on the Development of Yemeni EFL  
Learners' Oral Production**

**Amirh Ali Ahmad Aloudi**

*Researcher, Department of English,  
Faculty of Education,  
Sana'a University, Yemen*

**أميرة علي احمد العودي**

*باحثه - قسم اللغة الانجليزية  
كلية التربية - جامعة صنعاء - اليمن*

**الملخص:**

هدف هذا البحث إلى معرفة تأثير حكاية القصص القصيرة على الإنتاج اللفظي للطلاب اليمنيين الدارسين للغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية. اختيرت العينة المطلوبة للبحث عشوائياً من طلاب المستوى الثاني قسم اللغة الإنجليزية، كلية التربية، جامعة صنعاء، وتم توزيع العينة عشوائياً إلى مجموعتين: تجريبية وأخرى ضابطة. بعد تنفيذ الاختبار القبلي للمجموعتين درس طلاب المجموعة التجريبية (Spoken English) من خلال تقنية حكاية القصة القصيرة بينما درست المجموعة الضابطة هذه المادة من خلال الطريقة التقليدية على مدى أربعة أسابيع اخضعت بعدها المجموعتان إلى الاختبار البعدي. اسفرت النتائج عن وجود تطور إيجابي ملحوظ في أداء المجموعة التجريبية.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** تأثير، حكاية القصة القصيرة، الإنتاج اللفظي، الطلاب الدارسين للغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية.

**Abstract:**

This research aims at investigating the impact of using short storytelling teaching technique on the development of Yemeni EFL learners' oral production. The sample of the study was selected randomly from the Second Level students in the Department of English, Faculty of Education, Sana'a University. The selected subjects were assigned randomly into experimental and control groups. After conducting the pre-test for the two groups, the experimental group was taught Spoken English through short storytelling teaching technique whereas the Control group was taught spoken English through the traditional spoken English method. After eight lectures, the post-test was administered to both groups. The data gathered were processed and analyzed statistically through SPSS program. The results revealed that there is a positive impact of short storytelling teaching technique on the development of Yemeni EFL learners' oral production. Therefore, it is highly recommended that English teachers should use short storytelling to encourage learners to speak in order to develop their oral production.

**Keywords:** Impact, Short Storytelling, Oral Production, EFL Learners.

**1. Introduction**

Language is what we use to transfer ideas from one person to another. The most common way of doing this is by speech. Spoken language is human specific; it is what distinguishes us from all animals. The written form of any language always develops after the spoken form, not the other way round (Sesnan, 1997).

In the field of language learning, it is important for students to learn all the four language skills: speaking, listening, reading, and writing. According to the researcher' knowledge, schools usually concentrate on only two of the skills: reading and writing. This is mainly because the other two skills are not accounted for in examinations. Our students need English outside school as well as inside it. In Yemen,

where English is taught as a foreign language, English is used only in the classroom. Students can pass the examinations, and even gain high marks, while they are not able to speak English, i.e., to use the language for communication.

English is not merely reading and writing. It is not only single words. It is not even sentences. It also includes being able to hold a conversation, tell a story, give a report and make a speech. Teachers should take this fact into account, and much more time should be devoted to oral production of the learners. There are plenty of classroom techniques for improving spoken English of learners. Short Storytelling is one of the teaching techniques that can be used.

As a learning tool, short storytelling can encourage students to explore their unique

expressiveness and can heighten student's ability to communicate thoughts and feeling in an articulated, lucid manner. These benefits transcend the art experience to support daily life skills (Pollard, 2008).

Amy et al. (1998) mentioned that storytelling was the world's first teaching tool, the world's first entertainment, and the world's best communicator. Before computers, slide projectors, blackboards, books and paper, there was storytelling, the world's first teaching tool. Before television, radio, vaudeville and drama, there was storytelling, the world's first entertainment. Before faxes, telephones, telegraphs, and the written word, there was storytelling, the world's best communicator.

The authors asserted that short storytelling encourages students to use their imagination which can empower inventive ideas, contribute to self-confidence and personal motivation as they envision themselves competent and able to accomplish their hopes and dreams.

The researcher believes that short storytelling teaching technique improves the spoken English of the students. She is interested in using it as a treatment and sees its impact on the oral production of English learners. She also believes that this research is a new one in the field of EFL learning and teaching in Yemen.

### **1. Statement of the Problem**

According to the researchers' knowledge, English in Yemen is taught as a foreign language. It is not the medium of instruction. Students use it only inside the classroom, and this is undoubtedly restricting the students' opportunities for speaking the target language outside school. Teachers also focus excessively on reading and writing. The oral production of the learners is not given the importance it deserves. Most Yemeni teachers teach language by lecturing and focusing on grammatical rules instead of language use which deprives students from practicing speaking. In other words, teachers do not give students chances to practice language in real situations to promote speaking. Moreover, the extensive use of lecturing by Yemeni teachers de-motivates students and makes them passive learners. It prevents them from participating interactively in the process of teaching and

learning. The study conducted by Yassin et al. (2014) that investigated oral communication problems among Yemeni high school EFL students in Malaysia revealed that the oral problems could be categorized into three factors. Firstly, teachers were focused on the grammatical aspects while neglecting the practical side of the language and they did not encourage their students to speak English in class. Secondly, the curriculum was not designed to promote and enhance oral communication since students had very limited drills to practice orally. Thirdly, most of the students were not confident using English as a means of communication both inside and outside the classroom. Accordingly, this problem motivates the researcher to conduct research to develop Yemeni EFL learners' oral production.

### **2. Purpose of the Research**

This research aims at investigating the impact of short storytelling technique on EFL learners' oral production.

### **3. Research Hypothesis**

H01: There is no statistically significant difference at level ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ) between the means of the experimental group and those of the control one in the pre-test.

H02: There is no statistically significant difference at level ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ) between the means of the experimental group and those of the control one in the post-test.

### **4. Significance of the Research**

This research is significant in the sense it helps teachers, students, and curriculum designers as follows:

- Teachers can use storytelling technique to promote speaking as well as the other language skills.
- Students: It helps students to develop their oral production and their communication skills, which will contribute to the development of the process of EFL learning and teaching in Yemen.
- Curriculum designers: The positive results of this research encourage EFL curriculum designers in Yemen to adopt

storytelling-based learning approach in designing curriculum.

## 5. Limitations of the Research

This research was limited to

- The second level, Department of English, Faculty of Education, Sana'a University.
- It was also limited to using the technique of short storytelling only as a treatment.

## 6. Operational Definitions:

**Impact:** According to Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, impact is the powerful effect that something has on something. Operationally, it can be defined as the positive effect of short storytelling on learners' oral production.

Short storytelling can be defined as the vivid description of ideas, beliefs, personal experiences, and life-lessons through stories or narratives that evoke powerful emotions and insights (Serrat, 2008). Operationally, it can be defined as using words to express the events of a given story orally.

Oral production can be defined as the ability to articulate phonological features of the language comprehensibly (Nunan, 2003). Operationally, it can be defined as the learner's ability to present ideas orally. It was measured by an oral test which was assessed by an observation checklist.

## 2. Methodology:

The present research investigates the impact of short storytelling on the development of Yemeni EFL learners' oral production, so the experimental method was followed.

### 1. Research Variables:

**There were three variables in this study:**

1. An independent variable: the short storytelling technique.
2. A dependent variable of the research was the learner's oral production

### 2. Research Instruments:

For the purpose of achieving the aims of the current research, only one data collection tool was used (an oral test).

### 1. Structure of the oral test

The oral test which was used as a pre and post-test consisted of two questions. In the first question, students were asked to choose a topic to speak about from the two given topics in the test. The two given topics were of relevance to the students' everyday interest. The second question consisted of a short story. It required students to read the story and then say it a gain in his/her own words.

### 2. Validity of the Test

The test was discussed with five experts in the field of language teaching to validate its relatedness, clarity and appropriateness. All of them were satisfied with the first question. They were also satisfied with the second question but they suggested that the story should be made shorter than it was. Accordingly, the researcher tried to make the story as short as possible.

### 3. Administration of the Test

All the subjects had the test. In the first question, the subject was invited to choose one topic from the two given ones to speak on. He/she was asked in the second question to read the story to himself and then say it in his/her own words. They were not allowed to refer back to the written text once they have begun to say the story. The performances of the subjects were recorded by MP3 device to be analyzed.

### 3. Population and Sample

The population of the study was the Second Level students at the Department of English, Faculty of Education, Sana'a University. They were all Yemeni students sharing the same mother tongue, and similar English background. They also study the same courses taught by the same teachers. Through systematic random sampling procedure, sixty students were selected and assigned into experimental and control groups.

### 4. The Experiment

After selecting the sample and assigning the control group and the experimental group, the time of administrating the pre-test for both groups was determined. The researcher also prepared everything concerning the timetable

of the classes, the rooms and the materials for both groups. Then, the pre-test was held for the two groups in order to determine the level of the groups before conducting the experiment. The test was held with the help of another teacher and the time allowed for the test was fifteen minutes for each subject. The performances of the subjects were recorded and saved in the computer to be marked and analyzed. After the pre-test both groups were taught by the researcher in the Department of English during the ordinary timing of the lectures of the college, which ensured the familiarity of place and the suitability of time. The experimental group received the intended treatment, i.e., the storytelling teaching technique, while the control group was taught spoken English through the traditional spoken English method. Then, both groups were given the post-test.

### 5. Data Analysis

The purpose behind the present research was to investigate the impact of short storytelling teaching technique on oral production of EFL learners. It was hypothesized that there were no statistically significant differences between the means of the experimental group and the control one in the pre-post oral test at level ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ), so the statistical tools used in this research were as follows:

**Table (1)** Results of the Pre-test of the Control and Experimental Groups

	Paired Differences						T	Df	Sig. (2 tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference					
				Lower	Upper				
<b>Pair 1</b> Exper Cont	.214	19.523	3.689	7.356	7.784	.058	27	.954	

The table displayed that there was no statistically significant difference between the means of the experimental group and those of the control one since the value of t was .058 at the level of .954. In this case, it can be said that the experimental group and the control group were in the same level before conducting the experiment, i.e., the subjects in the two groups were similar in their spoken English before using short storytelling teaching technique.

### 6. Statistical Tools

The obtained scores were processed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences SPSS and the following statistical calculations were used to analyze the data:

1. Descriptive statistics (mean - standard deviation) were used to obtain the means of the experimental group and control group in the pre- and post-test.
2. Inferential statistics (Paired Samples T-Test) to find out the significance of mean differences.

### 3. Results and Discussion

The results of the research were as follows:

#### 1. Results of the first hypothesis (pre-test scores of the two groups)

In order to test the first hypothesis of the research, the level of groups should be maintained before the treatment. Although the sample of the study was selected and assigned randomly to guarantee that both groups are in the same level, it would be better to establish this statistically. Thus, the means of the two groups' performance in the pre-test were compared with each other. The following table presented the results of the experimental group and the control one in the pre-test.

#### 2. The Results of the Second Hypothesis (pre-test scores of the two groups):

The scores of the subjects of the experimental group and the control group in the pre- and post-test were typed in and processed statistically. A paired Sample t-Test was used to compare the means of the pre-test and the post-test of both groups together. Regardless of the groups; the means illustrated a noticeable difference with a significant value of (0.000), as shown in table 2.

**Table (2)** Results of the pre and Post-test of the control and experimental Groups

	Paired Differences					T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
Pair 1 Post-test - pre-test	19.143	18.337	2.450	24.053	14.232	7.812	55	.000

The results of the post-test showed that the mean of the experimental group was higher

than that of the control one. The following table illustrated the outcomes.

**Table (3)** Results of the post-test of experimental and control group

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Pair 1 Exper	72.1071	28	11.41584
Contr	39.5357	28	12.25193

To see if this difference in means is significant or not, a paired sample t-test is used to compare the mean of the experimental group with that of

the control one. This is shown in the following tables.

**Table (4)** Results of the post-test of the control and experimental Groups

	Paired Differences					T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
Pair 1 Exper - Contr	32.571	17.4598	3.2996	25.80120	39.3416	9.871	27	.000

The results showed that this difference in means had a high level of significance (0.000). Since the experimental group and control group were in the same level before the treatment, any difference noticed in the performance of the subjects in the post-test can be safely attributed to the effect of the treatment used. This difference in the mean of the two groups in the post-test which showed that the experimental group significantly out-performed the control group leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis which assumed that there is no statistically significant difference at level ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ) between the means of the experimental group and those of the control one in the post-test and the acceptance of the alternative hypothesis which stated that there is statistically significant difference at level ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ) between the means of the experimental group and those of the control one in the post-test. The level of the significance observed was (0.000) which indicated a high level of significance.

To sum up, before the treatment the experimental group and the control group had

similar level in their spoken English, but after the treatment the experimental group demonstrated a great development due to using short storytelling teaching technique as a treatment to improve their English oral production. This proved that using short storytelling technique is effective in the development of Yemeni EFL learners' oral production. These results are in accordance with the results reached at in some studies which investigated the effect of storytelling on learners' speaking such as, the study conducted by Wright (2019) which investigated the effect of storytelling on learners' oral and written language abilities and self-perception revealed that storytelling improves learners' oral language. Also, the study conducted by Burgos (2015) which investigated story-telling as a strategy to improve speaking skill showed that story-telling is effective in developing learner's speaking skill.

#### 4. Conclusions

Through the analysis of data and results interpretation the following conclusions were drawn:

- The subjects in the Experimental group benefited a lot from the implemented treatment.
- Short storytelling teaching technique had a positive effect on EFL learners' spoken English.
- Short storytelling teaching technique increased the learners' ability to speak English.

#### 5. Recommendations

Based on the results reached at, the following recommendation were suggested:

- Short storytelling is recommended in the EFL speaking classrooms because stories attract listeners and promote communication.
- Short storytelling can be used in the language classroom as a means of teaching and learning in general.
- Teachers are urged to introduce a short story session at the beginning of every language lesson to stimulate talks.
- Short storytelling teaching technique can be used effectively as a means of assessment. The learner can be

evaluated according to specific aspects in telling a story.

- The findings of this research should be considered and English Department staff is encouraged to use short storytelling technique in their teaching programs as much as possible.
- Syllabi designers in EFL context should integrate stories into the materials they develop for language learners.

#### 6. Scope for Further Researches

Other research similar to the current research can be made:

1. The effect of short story technique on the development of the other language skills (listening, reading, and writing).
2. Other research works can explore the effect of storytelling on developing English vocabulary of EFL learners. Descriptive research can also be done to describe written and spoken narrative skills of school-age individuals and use the results in developing story-based courses for language learners.

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