

# Fostering students' speaking performance through the Show and Tell technique

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## ABSTRACT

This study explores the impact of the Show and Tell technique on students' speaking ability and confidence in English learning. A quasi-experimental design was used to compare two groups of students from a public senior high school in Palu, Central Sulawesi: an experimental group taught using the Show and Tell method, and a control group not taught using this method. Both groups completed pre- and post-tests to measure their speaking skills, including fluency, comprehension and accuracy. The findings reveal that the experimental group outperformed the control group, scoring about ten points higher in the post-test. A Mann-Whitney test (Asymp. Sig. = 0.001) confirmed this difference as statistically significant. These results suggest that Show and Tell is more than just a classroom activity: it not only enhances fluency, comprehension, and accuracy but also encourages students to speak up more actively. In practice, this highlights the value of interactive learning strategies in creating a supportive classroom environment where students feel safe to try, make mistakes, and improve. This study contributes to the field of English language teaching by providing empirical evidence that the Show and Tell technique effectively integrates affective and linguistic development, promoting communicative competence in EFL contexts. Teachers are therefore encouraged to adopt Show and Tell as a practical tool to help students develop their speaking skills more effectively.

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## INTRODUCTION

Speaking is a very important skill to master because it plays an increasingly significant role in the modern era and is one of the most frequently used skills in everyday life. In oral communication, students must master several aspects such as pronunciation, fluency, grammar, vocabulary, and comprehension in order to communicate effectively in English. This is aligned with the views of researchers who emphasize that speaking is not merely about mastering vocabulary or grammatical structures, but also involves mastering all components of speaking skills (Abdullaeva & Avezova, 2020; Otodu & Khoiriyah, 2023).

The current curriculum places speaking skills as one of the core competencies that students must master in order to communicate meaningfully. Students are required to be able to interact verbally in various situations, convey ideas clearly, and utilize verbal and nonverbal strategies appropriately. However, in practice, many students still experience obstacles in improving their English fluency. Some of the obstacles that often arise include low self-confidence, poor pronunciation, limitations in the use of grammar and vocabulary, and difficulty maintaining the flow of conversation. In line with this, Nety et al. (2020) and Tuan and Mai (2015) revealed that anxiety and fear of making mistakes are often the main obstacles, which affect students' fluency, accuracy, and comprehension in speaking, vocabulary mastery also plays a crucial role in supporting students' oral communication (Alqahtani, 2015).

In response to these challenges, a number of recent studies have explored the use of digital platforms as an alternative space for speaking practice. For example, Fauzi (2025) showed that the use of TikTok duets can increase confidence and encourage verbal participation among students through digital interaction. Similarly, research by Hafizhah and Daulay (2025) found that the use of the Real-life English Application (REA) has a positive effect on the speaking skills of high school students, especially through repeated practice in an interactive environment.

Although these findings confirm the potential of digital media, there are several limitations that need to be considered. Digital-based activities often lack face-to-face interaction, so they do not fully meet the need for authentic communication in the classroom (Fajaryani et al., 2023). In addition, dependence on technology sometimes makes students less focused on core aspects such as accuracy of pronunciation and fluency of real-time conversation.

To bridge this gap, classroom-based techniques such as Show and Tell can be a complementary solution. Show and Tell is a learning activity in which students are encouraged to bring an object or share a personal experience to be presented in front of their friends. This technique provides meaningful opportunities for students

to practice communicating ideas in English through authentic interaction. Moreover, Adhitya and Mivtahuljanah (2022), found that the application of Show and Tell can help students improve their confidence and fluency in speaking. Meanwhile, Rahayu (2024) emphasized that this activity can foster student motivation and engagement in the learning process, and Wardani (2024) added that Show and Tell also creates a supportive learning environment, reduces anxiety, and encourages natural communication among students.

Additionally, Show and Tell method significantly improves students' speaking skills and confidence (Azahary et al., 2023; Gunadiputra et al., 2022). This method not only helps students develop fluency and language accuracy, but also builds their emotional readiness to perform in front of the class. In addition, Ritonga (2021) emphasized that interactive oral activities such as Show and Tell can encourage active participation and engagement of students in the classroom, so that students are more motivated to express their ideas spontaneously, improve self-expression, and reduce anxiety when speaking. Thus, the combination of cognitive, linguistic, and psychological aspects in the application of Show and Tell makes it an effective strategy to support the development of students' English communication skills.

The Show and Tell activity, though simple in design, provides an authentic communicative space for students to express ideas, share experiences, and practice speaking in meaningful contexts. A recent meta-analysis conducted by Oktaviani et al. (2024) confirmed that Show and Tell, along with role-play and storytelling, significantly enhances students' fluency, accuracy, and confidence in speaking. Consistent with this, Hanafi et al. (2025) found that this method improves students' confidence in in class discussions and communication skills at elementary school level (Arviani & Fajriyah, 2018). Collectively, these studies highlight that Show and Tell is not merely an instructional activity but a pedagogically grounded strategy that effectively cultivates both linguistic competence and learner confidence.

Although the effectiveness of Show and Tell has been well-documented across elementary and junior high school contexts, research focusing on its application at the senior high school level remains scarce. At this stage, learners encounter more complex communicative demands, requiring not only accuracy and fluency but also self-confidence to perform effectively in academic and social interactions. Therefore, investigating the use of Show and Tell at the high school level may offer a more comprehensive understanding of its potential in enhancing students' speaking performance and confidence in English as a foreign language (EFL) context.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### Research Design

This study uses a quantitative method with a quasi-experimental design to examine the effectiveness of the Show and Tell technique in improving students' speaking ability and confidence in learning English. The quasi-experimental design was chosen because it allows researchers to compare the results of two different groups, the experimental group and the control group, in conditions where full randomization of participants is not possible. According to Sugiyono (2017), this design provides an opportunity for researchers to conduct a systematic evaluation of the cause-and-effect relationship between research variables, while maintaining the authenticity of the educational context being studied.

Furthermore, Stratton (2019) explains that quasi-experimental research, especially those using a pre-test and post-test structure, is very useful for classroom-based research where participants have been divided into specific groups for administrative or ethical reasons. This design allows researchers to assess the effectiveness of a learning intervention by comparing improvements in learning outcomes before and after the treatment is administered. This approach also has practical advantages because it balances internal and external validity, ensuring that the research results remain relevant and applicable to real learning situations.

In addition, Cousineau and Laurencelle (2016) emphasize that quasi-experimental methods can help minimize threats to research validity that may arise due to the absence of randomization. This approach allows researchers to consider external variables that may potentially influence research results. Thus, the use of this design in this study is considered appropriate to obtain reliable evidence regarding the effect of the Show and Tell technique on students' speaking skills without having to change the existing class structure.

In its implementation, the experimental group was given treatment using the Show and Tell technique, which is a structured speaking activity designed to improve students' fluency, accuracy, and confidence. Meanwhile, the control group underwent conventional learning activities without the application of Show and Tell. Both groups were given pre-tests and post-tests to measure their speaking skills, which included aspects of fluency, comprehension, and linguistic accuracy.

### Research Participant

The population of this study consisted of 460 students from 13 classes of grade X at a public senior high school in Palu. From this population, the researcher employed a cluster random sampling technique to determine the sample. Additionally, cluster

random sampling is used when research subjects are already organized into natural groups, such as school classes (Cousineau & Laurencelle, 2016). This method was chosen because it is more efficient and practical, allowing the researcher to select entire classes as samples without separating students from their original groups, thus avoiding disruption to the teaching schedule. Based on the results of the draw, two classes were selected: X E5 as the experimental group and X E6 as the control group. Each class consisted of 35 students, resulting in a total sample of 70 participants.

## Instrument

The research instrument employed was a speaking test designed to measure students' English-speaking skills. The evaluation process involved a spoken presentation, in which students were tasked with providing a detailed description of a specific topic within a time frame of two to three minutes. The students' performances were evaluated using an analytic scoring rubric adapted from Jabu (2008), which assessed three key aspects: fluency, accuracy, and comprehension.

Each aspect was evaluated using a weighted scale, contributing to a total score of 100 points (fluency = 30 points, accuracy = 35 points, and comprehension = 35 points). This rubric furnished a more detailed and objective description of students' speaking proficiency. The evaluation framework encompassed both linguistic and communicative components, thereby ensuring a multifaceted assessment of students' proficiency in articulating ideas, maintaining coherence, and employing precise language structures during oral tasks. The instrument thus allowed for a fair, consistent, and pedagogically sound assessment of students' performance in spoken English.

## Data Collection

The data collection techniques in this study included pre-test and post-test. Pre-test and post-test methods are used to assess whether an intervention has an effect or causes a change in participants (Stratton, 2019). The test used in this study was an oral speaking test designed to measure students' speaking ability in descriptive texts. Both the pre-test and post-test used the same test format, but with different yet equivalent topics to avoid memorization.

During the test, students were requested to describe a given topic (for example, "My Favorite Place" or "My Pet") verbally for two to three minutes in front of the class. Their performances were evaluated using an analytic scoring rubric adapted from Jabu (2008), which included three main criteria: fluency, accuracy, and comprehension. Each criterion was valued using a weighted scale with a total possible score of 100 points, providing a comprehensive and objective representation of students' speaking abilities.

Pre-tests were conducted in the first meeting to assess the students' initial speaking ability. The treatment was implemented over six meetings for the experimental group using the Show and Tell technique, while the control group was taught using the conventional method. After the treatment, both groups took a post-test to evaluate their improvement in speaking skills.

In the experimental group, the learning procedure had a consistent structure throughout the six treatment sessions. Each class began with a greeting, a short prayer, a check of attendance, and a brief review of the day's objectives. The teacher then introduced the topic and provided a demonstration of how to describe an object effectively using the 'Show and Tell' technique. This demonstration exemplified key speaking components such as setting, pronunciation and vocabulary usage.

Afterwards, the students were divided into small groups and instructed to prepare a short presentation using simple props, real objects or images related to the given theme. Using visual aids helps students to generate ideas and reduces anxiety during speaking tasks. Although the procedure remains the same, each session features a different theme to maintain student interest and provide diverse opportunities to practice describing people, objects and experiences. These themes included favorite toys, favorite foods, traditional houses, favorite places, traditional costumes and pets.

During each session, students took turns to present their Show and Tell presentations to the class. Their peers were encouraged to listen carefully and ask brief follow-up questions, fostering authentic interaction. The teacher provides direct feedback focusing on pronunciation, fluency, vocabulary choice and grammatical accuracy. These constructive comments are delivered in a supportive manner to build students' self-confidence and motivation. Over time, this structured yet interactive process enables students to develop their linguistic competence and confidence in speaking in front of others.

Meanwhile, the control group received instruction through conventional, teacher-centered methods. The lessons primarily focused on explaining the structure and language features of descriptive texts, emphasizing grammar rules and vocabulary from the textbook. After the explanation, students completed reading comprehension tasks and short written exercises related to the topic. Speaking activities were limited to brief, individual responses or repetition drills rather than extended oral production. Unlike the experimental group, students in the control group did not engage in Show and Tell activities or use visual aids. Consequently, learning in the control group emphasized linguistic knowledge and accuracy over communicative practice and self-expression.

At the end of the intervention period, both groups completed a post-test using the same speaking test format as the pre-test. This approach allowed for a reliable comparison of the students' progress after the treatment, ensuring that any significant differences in outcomes could be attributed to the use of the Show and Tell technique.

The detailed implementation of classroom activities for both groups is presented in the table below.

**Table 1.** Teaching procedures for experimental and control group

Meeting	Experimental Group (Show and Tell Technique)	Control Group (Conventional Method)
1.	Pre-test: Students describe a familiar topic orally to assess initial speaking ability.	Pre-test: Students describe a familiar topic orally to assess initial speaking ability.
2.	Topic: My Favorite Toy — Students bring a toy and describe it using the Show and Tell technique.	Topic: My Favorite Toy — Teacher explains descriptive text and vocabulary exercises.
3.	Topic: My Favorite Food — Students bring a picture or sample of food to describe in English.	Topic: My Favorite Food — Reading text and comprehension discussion.
4.	Topic: Traditional House — Students describe a traditional house from their region.	Topic: Traditional House — Teacher explanation and Q&A.
5.	Topic: Place That I Love — Students describe their favorite place using visuals or photos.	Topic: Place That I Love — Reading and vocabulary activity.
6.	Topic: Traditional Costume — Students describe traditional clothing from their culture or family.	Topic: Traditional Costume — Grammar and comprehension exercises.
7.	Topic: My Pet — Students present about their pet or favorite animal using pictures or real props.	Topic: My Pet — Reading descriptive text and class discussion.
8.	Post-test: Students describe a familiar topic using the same speaking test format as the pre-test to measure improvement.	Post-test: Students describe a familiar topic using the same speaking test format as the pre-test to measure improvement.

This procedure ensured that both groups received equal instructional time, similar topics, and comparable assessment formats, with the only difference being the teaching approach. The Show and Tell technique emphasized student-centered,

interactive learning, whereas the conventional method focused on teacher explanation and textbook-based exercises.

## Data Analysis

In this study, data were analyzed using an independent t-test to examine differences in English speaking ability between the experimental and control groups after treatment was administered. This test was chosen because it is appropriate for comparing two independent groups (Kim, 2019). Before conducting the t-test, the researchers first performed prerequisite tests, namely a normality test to ensure normal data distribution and a homogeneity test to examine the similarity of the two groups' variances.

If the parametric test requirements were not met, for example, if the data was not normally distributed or the variance between groups was not homogeneous, the analysis was continued with an alternative non-parametric test, namely the Mann–Whitney U Test, which is appropriate for comparing two independent groups with data that is not normally distributed (McKnight & Najab, 2022).

## RESULTS

Pre-test was conducted on both groups to assess the students' initial speaking abilities. The pre-test data provided an overview of the students' readiness before the treatment was applied and served as a reference for comparing the post-test results. The descriptive statistics of the pre-test, including the minimum, maximum, mean, and standard deviation, are shown in the following table.

**Table 2.** Descriptives statistics of pre-test result

No	Class	Mean	Minimum	Maximum	Std. Deviation
1	Experimental	42.47	26.66	66.66	10.896
2	Control	42.59	26.66	73.33	11.361

The pre-test descriptive analysis shows that the experimental group had an average of 42.47 (SD = 10.896; Min = 26.66; Max = 66.66), while the control group had an average of 42.59 (SD = 11.361; Min = 26.66; Max = 73.33). These results indicate that the initial abilities of students in both groups were relatively comparable and fairly homogeneous, so that both groups could be used as a basis for comparison before treatment was administered.

The results of the descriptive analysis of the post-test showed an increase in speaking skills in both groups. The experimental group obtained a higher average score than

the control group. In addition, the range of scores in the experimental group tended to be wider, indicating that some students were able to achieve maximum results after being given treatment using the Show and Tell Technique. Meanwhile, although the control group also experienced an improvement, their average score and highest achievement were relatively lower than those of the experimental group. These findings provide preliminary indications that the treatment given to the experimental group had a positive impact on improving students' speaking skills.

**Table 3.** Descriptive statistics of post-test result

No	Class	Mean	Minimum	Maximum	Std. Deviation
1	Experimental	60	46.66	86.66	11.221
2	Control	50.55	33.33	73.33	9.984

The post-test descriptive analysis in Table 3 shows that the experimental group had an average of 60 (SD = 11.221; Min = 46.66; Max = 86.66), while the control group had an average of 50.55 (SD = 9.984; Min = 33.33; Max = 73.33). These results indicate that the speaking ability of students in the experimental group increased significantly compared to the control group after being given the treatment, with a relatively similar distribution of scores in both groups.

**Table 4.** Normality test

No	Class	df	Sig.	Normality	
				Yes	No
1	Pre-test Control	36	.018	✓	
2	Post-test Control	36	.000		✓
3	Pre-test Eksperiment	36	.013	✓	
4	Post-test Eksperiment	36	.009		✓

To ensure data validity before conducting hypothesis testing, researchers first conducted normality tests on the pre-test and post-test scores of the experimental and control groups. Normality tests aim to determine whether the data distribution follows a normal distribution pattern so that it can be analyzed using parametric tests (Das & Imon, 2016). The normality test was performed using the Shapiro-Wilk method because the sample size in each group was less than 50. According to Ukponmwan and Bright (2017), Shapiro-Wilk has good power and is more sensitive than other normality tests in detecting distribution deviations in small samples. The decision

criterion is that if the significance value (Sig.) is greater than 0.05, the data is considered to be normally distributed, whereas if the Sig. value is less than 0.05, the data is considered to be not normally distributed. The complete normality test results are shown in Table 4.

Based on the results of the normality test using Shapiro-Wilk, the significance value for all groups, both in the pre-test and post-test, was less than 0.05 (see Table 4). In detail, the control group's pre-test had a Sig. value of 0.018, the control group's post-test had a Sig. value of 0.000, the experimental group's pre-test had a Sig. value of 0.013, and the experimental group's post-test had a Sig. value of 0.009. This indicates that the data is not normally distributed. Thus, further data analysis cannot use parametric tests but must be done with appropriate non-parametric tests. According to The Statistics Tutor's Quick Guide (2022), the Mann-Whitney U test is designed to compare two independent groups when the data does not meet parametric assumptions, while the Wilcoxon signed-rank test is used for paired data. Since the groups in this study are independent and the normality test data shows deviations from normality, the researcher chose the Mann-Whitney U test as the comparison test for the post-test data.

**Table 5. Mann-Whitney U test**

No	Class	Sig.	Assymp. Sig. (2-tailed)
1	Post Test Experimental and Control Class	Sig < .005	.001

The results of the analysis using the Mann-Whitney U test show that there is a significant difference between the experimental group and the control group in the post-test scores for speaking ability. The Assymp. Sig. (2-tailed) value = 0.001, which is smaller than the significance threshold of 0.05. Thus, the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ), which states that there is no difference in speaking ability between the two groups, is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis ( $H_1$ ) is accepted. This shows that the application of the Show and Tell Technique has a significant effect on improving students' speaking ability compared to the control group.

## DISCUSSION

The key findings of this study show that students who were taught using the Show and Tell technique achieved a significant improvement in their English-speaking ability and confidence compared to those taught through conventional methods. The post-test results revealed that the experimental group scored on average ten points

higher than the control group, with the Mann–Whitney test (Asymp. Sig. = 0.001) confirming that the difference was statistically significant. Based on a standardised speaking rubric adapted from Jabu (2008), improvements were observed across all assessed components, including fluency, comprehension, and accuracy. Students demonstrated better coherence, vocabulary use, and pronunciation control. These findings demonstrate that the Show and Tell technique effectively fosters students' active participation and emotional engagement, enabling them to express ideas more fluently and confidently. This result is consistent with prior studies conducted by Batubun and Rokhmah (2024) and Sianturi and Citraningtyas (2024), which reported significant gains in speaking competence and self-assurance among learners through the same method. The findings also align with the principles of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), which highlights interaction and authentic communication as essential elements for developing communicative competence (Littlewood, 2018; Qizi, 2021; Richards & Rodgers, 2014; Tian, 2025). Moreover, the observed increase in students' confidence supports Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis (as discussed by Zang, 2022), suggesting that reducing anxiety and enhancing motivation can facilitate language input processing.

Overall, this study provides empirical evidence that Show and Tell is beneficial in improving linguistic performance, including fluency, comprehension and accuracy. It also demonstrates that Show and Tell is an effective strategy for building students' confidence and encouraging them to speak. This reinforces the idea that effective language instruction must integrate both cognitive and emotional dimensions of learning.

## CONCLUSION

This study shows that the application of the Show and Tell strategy in English language learning has a significant positive impact on students' speaking skills. Students who experienced this technique demonstrated greater improvement in their fluency, comprehension, and accuracy compared to those taught through conventional methods. Moreover, their confidence levels also increased, suggesting that the enhancement in speaking ability went hand in hand with stronger self-assurance.

In practical terms, these findings emphasize the importance of using interactive learning strategies that create a supportive classroom environment, encourage students to speak more confidently, and reduce their anxiety or fear of making mistakes. From a theoretical perspective, this study supports the notion that emotional factors, particularly self-confidence, are crucial for successful foreign language learning. Based on these results, teachers are encouraged to integrate the Show and Tell technique not only as a speaking activity but also as a regular warm-

up session or part of a thematic project. By allowing students to share personal experiences or describe meaningful objects, teachers can foster engagement, promote authentic communication, and help students build both linguistic competence and confidence.

Although this study provides valuable insights, several limitations should be noted. The sample size was relatively small. In addition, the assessment of speaking ability focused only on fluency, comprehension, and accuracy. Therefore, future research is encouraged to involve a larger and more diverse sample, employ a wider range of assessment instruments, and explore additional aspects of speaking such as pronunciation and vocabulary use. Longitudinal or comparative studies can also be conducted to examine the long-term effectiveness of Show and Tell across different learning contexts.

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

## AUTHOR (S) CONTRIBUTION

Nurfadhilawati S. Halaco was responsible for conceptualization, data collection and analysis, and drafting the manuscript. Konder Manurung, Mashuri, and Abdul Komarudin provided supervision, critical feedback, and scholarly guidance. All authors reviewed and approved the final manuscript and take full responsibility for its integrity.

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