

The Effect of Short-story Retelling on Iranian Intermediate EFL Learners' Speaking Skill

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Abstract

This study investigates the effect of short-story retelling on the Iranian Intermediate EFL Learners' speaking. To this end, the study was carried out among 40 female EFL learners of intermediate level within 21 sessions in a language center in Rasht, Iran. To select homogenous participants for the study with respect to their foreign language proficiency, First Certificate in English test was administered to 80 EFL learners. The participants were randomly assigned into two groups: an experimental and a control group. Pre-test of speaking was administered to both groups at the beginning of the study. Then, the same textbook (project 2) was taught by the same teacher to both groups. The project 2 book was taught with the same teaching method for both groups. The specific treatment was administered to the experimental group for about 20 minutes in each session. Afterwards, the post-test was given to both groups. Independent-Samples t -tests were used to compare the means of the two independent groups (experimental vs. control) for the pre-test and post-test respectively. Finally, the results of the pre-test analysis indicated the homogeneity of both groups whereas those of the post-test analysis showed that the experimental group performed significantly better than the control group. The results showed that using the short-story retelling technique improves the Iranian intermediate EFL learners' speaking in terms of fluency, vocabulary, grammar, and, pronunciation.

Keywords: short-story retelling, speaking skill, fluency, vocabulary

INTRODUCTION

As language is a means of communication, it plays an important role in students' intellectual, social, and emotional development and it is the key towards the successful study of all subjects. Speaking is one of the basic language skills in the curriculum which all students should master (Indramawan, 2013, p.18). Learners of English as a foreign language find the speaking a challenging skill to master. Since this research attempts to

investigate the effect of the learners' storytelling on their speaking improvement, it is quite a significant study.

Students need to communicate and convey meanings that have certain communicative purpose in different genres. One of these genres is to retell stories, which gives a lot of exposure to students and enables them to improve their specific speaking performance. Also, they can increase their sensitivity in recognizing pronunciation errors, enlarge their vocabulary, understand how to make grammatical sentences, and speak fluently. Bygate (1998) states that speaking is a highly complex mental activity which differs from other activities because it requires much greater effort of the central nervous system (p. 23). In short, it is worth conducting research on the development of speaking skill by language learners.

The research focuses on how storytelling improves the students' English speaking competence was carried out in Safir institute in Rasht. Specifically, the study deals with the strengths and weaknesses of the use of story retelling in improving the students' English speaking competence.

Speaking is an important skill in communication that often seems to be a source of problems for many language learners. Speaking is the most challenging skill so nowadays teachers apply so many different teaching techniques so as to choose the best one which helps the learners improve their speaking skill. Story retelling is one of the best techniques that can help EFL students improve their speaking skill. "It is often easier to understand a story being told than one which is read aloud because storytelling gives motivation, meaning, fluency, language awareness, and stimulus for the student speaking" (Indramawan, 2013, p. 18)

Retelling stories and events is a common way that many people often use in their communication. To overcome the difficulty in using the target language, story retelling is one of the recommended techniques which can help language learners enhance their knowledge of vocabulary, grammatical structures, and pronunciation. Moreover, stories provide various topics for learners to begin a conversation with others (Deacon and Murphey, 2001, P.17). Thus, the development of speaking skill in EFL setting is the problem investigated in the present study, for which the use of retelling story technique is a potential solution for the problem.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The concepts of speaking

Speaking is one of two productive skills in a language teaching. It is defined as a process of building and sharing meaning through the use of verbal or oral form (Chaney & Burk, 1988, p.13 and Gebhard, 1996, p.169). Moreover; Nunan (2003) defines that speaking consists of producing systematic verbal utterances to convey meaning (p.42).

There are many definitions of speaking that have been proposed by some experts in language learning. Brown (2001) states that when someone can speak a language it

means that he can carry on a conversation reasonably competently. In addition, he cites that the benchmark of successful acquisition of language is almost always the demonstration of an ability to accomplish pragmatic goals through an interactive discourse with other language speakers (p. 267).

Based on Bygate (1987), speaking skill is viewed as comprising two components: production skills and interaction skills, both of which can be affected by two conditions: firstly, processing conditions, taking into consideration the fact that 'a speech takes place under the pressure of time'; secondly, reciprocity conditions connected with a mutual relationship between the interlocutors.

Speaking Assessment

Based on the IELTS Australia, British Council and Cambridge English Language Assessment Criteria (22 Dec, 2015) measuring the students' speaking ability has four competences as follows:

- Pronunciation
- Grammar
- Vocabulary
- Fluency

Definitions of Story Retelling

"Retelling is reading or listening that learners remember from reading or listening and retell what they recognize either through orally or in writing "(Morrow, 1989, p.40)." It is a tool for developing student's apprehension "(Morrow,1986, p.396). "Retelling is the most directly accessing in teaching and the reaction result of the reader from the text" (Johnson ,1983, P. 54). Retelling signifies the reader's or the listener's understanding of learning, creates a new construction of character and reflects in retelling apprehension. Furthermore, Ellis (1991) adds vocabularies in story are presented in vivid and clear context and illustration help to convey meaning. Both the context and amusing situation can make the vocabulary easy to remember (p.33)

The Model for Story Retelling

The story retelling was done based on Labov story Retelling Model. Six key categories are rendered down from his model. They were explained in detail to students at the first session via a PowerPoint.

- Abstract

The abstract tells what the story is about. Before the actual telling of the story, the narrator often begins by giving the most important or noticeable points, usually with one or two clauses (Labov, 1972, p. 363)

- Orientation

Usually at the outset of narrative, it is essential to identify the time, place, participants, their activities, and the context in which the story happened (Labov, 1972, p. 364). In this part of the story, copula sentences, descriptive relative clauses, time orientation, place orientation, and role identification are often used, for instance, the use of *be*, *there is/there*, *one morning*. (Hatch, 1992, p. 165)

➤ Complicating action

The complicating action is composed of a set of connected narrative events making up a story and is usually characterized by temporal sequence. In this section of the story, narrative clauses, especially restricted clauses, which can be displaced over a large part of the narrative without changing the semantic interpretation, are often used (Labov, 1970, p. 370).

➤ Resolution

The resolution or result is when the main character in the story attains the goal (Hatch, 1992, p. 166).

➤ Evaluation

The evaluation section is used to explain and to make sure that the story is worth recounting and making it understandable to listeners. Labov (1972) stated that the evaluation in the story answers the question: *So what?* (p. 370)

➤ Coda

The coda is used to bridge the gap between the story and the present time (Labov, 1972, p. 365).

Previous Related Studies

Bygate (2002) compared performance on a task practiced over a 10-week period with performance on tasks that had not been practiced. Subjects were eighty-four overseas students at the University of Reading. Two sets of tasks were designed for the study: a narrative set and an interview set. In the narrative task, students were required to retell a Tom and Jerry cartoon after three weeks. The interview tasks on the other hand were structured around pictures. The student's oral production was measured in terms of repertoire or the range of language features used, accuracy which refers to the adequacy of the choice of lexical item, collocation and overall errors, and fluency which refers to amount and type or repetition. The study showed that redoing a task is associated with a number of changes in the nature of performance, all of which add to the density of the ideas which are expressed. The study proved that the repeated performance of the task seemed to engage a more syntactic mode, with subjects showing greater tendency to self - correct and to enhance fluency as well.

Gorjian, Moosavinia, and Shahramiri (2011) investigated the effects of telling oral summary of short story on 68 pre-intermediate male/female learners' speaking

proficiency. The results determined the positive effect of short-story retelling on developing speaking proficiency among learners. Findings also showed that females in both groups performed better than males in the post-test; however, t-test analysis showed no significant difference between two groups.

Pinandhita had studied her research in 2011 of class 2I students at IKIP PGRI Madiun University about the improving students' speaking skill by retelling technique using video. She explained the purposes of the study in two purposes. First, she investigated students' speaking proficiency after using story retelling technique by using video. Second, she wanted to find students' motivation in the speaking class. However, the sampling of this research was 34 students of the class 2I of IKIP PGRI Madiun University. Then, this research had shown the positive results that are the benefit of education. Retelling technique by using video can improve students' speaking ability. She also found that story retelling technique by using video can improve student's motivation in a speaking class.

The effectiveness of storytelling in enhancing communicative skill was studied by Mokhtar, Abdul Halim, and Kamarolzaman (2011). In their study, students worked in groups of three and each one was asked to read a story and tell it to his/her classmates. When compared with control group they became more self-confident in expressing themselves creatively. They were able to use the learned activities and skill in real-life, and they also learned when and where to use certain words and phrases.

Fajri conducted the research in 2012 about the ability of the eleventh grade students in story retelling at SMK Rohmatul Ummah Jekulo Kudus by using cartoon film. Results of the study showed that the ability to retell the story of the eleventh grade students could improve speaking skill after using cartoons film. He also recommended the use of cartoon film in teaching because students can more easily learn to speak English.

Aliakbari & Mohsennejad (2014) studied the effect of the story retelling opinion gap task on Iranian EFL student's speaking skill. The samples of this research were 29 students from Zaban Sara Institute in Khorram Abad and they were studied in an intermediate of English. The purpose was to investigate the efficiency of story retelling opinion gap on the promotion of Iranian EFL students. The participants were divided into the control groups and experimental. Also, a quasi-experimental was the research design, and the tasks had three strategies such as pre, while, post. The researchers analyzed the result from t-test statistics, and found that students speaking skill can be promoted by story retelling opinion gap.

This study has investigated the effect short-story retelling techniques on the Iranian intermediate EFL learners' speaking skill. The current research includes one major question in general, while the major questions is broken down into four specific (minor) questions. In fact, answering the major question depends on these four minor questions. Thus, the following research questions are formulated for the study:

1. Does using the short-story retelling technique improve the Iranian intermediate EFL learners' speaking skill?
 - a. Does using the short-story retelling technique improve the Iranian intermediate EFL learners' speaking in terms of vocabulary?
 - b. Does using the short-story retelling technique improve the Iranian intermediate EFL learners' speaking in terms of fluency?
 - c. Does using the short-stories retelling technique improve the Iranian intermediate EFL learners' speaking in terms of grammar?
 - d. Does using the short-story retelling technique improve the Iranian intermediate EFL learners' speaking in terms of pronunciation?

METHOD

Design of this Study

A quasi-experimental design was adopted for the study to see the effect of short-story retelling techniques (independent variable) on Iranian Intermediate EFL Learners' speaking skill (dependent variable). The students were selected out of 80 intermediate students at Safir institute in Rasht. To select homogenous participants for the study with respect to their foreign language proficiency, First Certificate in English test was administered to 80 EFL learners. Then 40 students were selected through convenient sampling. The participants assigned one experimental group (20 students) and one control group (20 students).

Participants

Students

For the first place of the study, 80 Iranian EFL learners studying English language at Safir institute in Rasht were chosen. They were all girls with Persian as their native language, with the age range of 13-15, and an average age of 14. They took part the project 2 book at Safir institute in Rasht. The participants were examined for the level of their speaking skill through FCE test (2001). This was done to select the main participants among 80 ones. Based on the results of the standardized placement test, the participants were all considered to be at intermediate level.

Based on the result of the placement test 40 students was selected as the main participants of the study and they were interviewed using First Certificate in English test (2008) in order to further ensure that they were placed at the intermediate level. Having done this, it was demonstrated that all 40 students were at intermediate level of English language speaking proficiency. Therefore, the main participants of the present study were selected through convenient sampling.

The participants were divided into one experimental group and one control group (each group consisting of 20 students). It should be noted that the selection of 15 students out of 30 for the pilot study was based on the framework of the main study.

Raters

Two professional English teachers scored the interview both in the pre-test and the post-test according to the IELTS Assessment Criteria. The both raters were English teachers for more than 7 years and they have master's degree in teaching English language.

Materials

First Certificate in English test

The First Certificate in English (FCE) was originally offered in 1939. This test is published by the University of Cambridge Local Examination Syndicate (UCLES). FCE has widespread recognition in commerce and industry, e.g. for public contact or secretarial work in banking, airlines, catering, etc.

IELTS Assessment Criteria for Speaking

According the IELTS Assessment, there are four criteria which is important for the examiner: Fluency, vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation, each of which is rated from 0 to 9. In this study, the two expert raters were asked to score the pre-test and post-test according to IELTS Assessment Descriptors. All 4 criteria are independently assessed by either of the raters.

Short story

Twenty short stories at intermediate level were used for the experimental group. The stories were chosen from www.ajarnjohn.com which is a site with stories in all levels. All of the 20 short stories were chosen in a way that was suitable to be read in the class. Their contexts were compatible with our culture and religion. All of the 20 stories were summarized and then the summaries were given to the students. This way, each of the students could choose the story which they were interested in.

procedures

Pilot study

Prior to the intervention training program, a pilot study was conducted by the researcher to ensure that the subsequent formal study runs smoothly. The purpose of the pilot study was also to establish instrument validity, and procedural reliability so as to ensure valid and reliable data collection. It is also done to ensure about the inter-rater reliability because both pre-test and post-test were recorded and two expert raters were asked to rate it. The pilot study was also done to ensure the Reliability of the FCE speaking test

Main study

The following steps were followed in the process of conducting the study.

Pre-test of speaking was administered to both groups at the beginning of the study. The experiment was conducted during regular class periods. The course consisted of 21 sessions and each week included two 90 minutes' sessions. At the first session, the researcher explained the procedures of the study. The students were taught the story structure by a PowerPoint presentation. The researcher described the setting, characters, plot, conflict, resolution, point of view and theme to the students by stating examples through a PowerPoint presentation.

The researcher summarized 20 intermediate short stories from www.ajarnjohn.com and gave the summaries of those 20 stories to the students, asking them to choose one of them according to their interest as a term project. The stories and the audio of the stories were given to the students just one session before the story presentation session. This way, all the students had equal time to prepare for their term project. So, all the students had the story one session before the presentation session and could read it. Each student had to present her/his story in a session in 10-15 minutes. The teacher asked them to summarize the story, make 7-10 comprehension questions and find the synonyms of all new words in their own story. Also, the teacher asked them to search for the setting, characters, conflict, resolution, point of view and theme of the story.

Each session, after the student summarized his own story orally, the teacher summarized it once more and then the teacher asked some students to tell one part of the story. After that comprehension questions were asked. At the third session the summary and comprehension of the previous story were asked first and then the new story was presented by the student. This kind of repetition was carried out during 21 sessions in a way that at the beginning of each session the summary and comprehension questions were asked based on the previous story (last session) and then the new story was presented. The experimental group received this treatment during the 21 sessions but the control group did not receive this treatment. The same teacher taught the same textbook (project 2) to both groups.

After 21 sessions, the post-test (the FCE post-test) was administered. The scores on the post-test ranged from 1-9 according to IELTS Assessment. Finally, the results of both pre-test and post-test were compared for data analysis. After collecting the data from the performances of control and experimental groups, the data was analyzed (through Statistical Package for Social Science software). An Independent-Sample T-Test was conducted to compare the means of the experimental group with that of the control group in pre-test and post-test.

Data analysis

To analyze the data, the researcher conducted the Independent-Samples t -tests on the results of the pre and post-test speaking test. Independent-Samples t -tests examined the possible differences between the means of the two independent groups (experimental vs. control). It was run to see whether the means for the two independent groups were significantly different from each other in terms of four categories of the

speaking tests. In other words, the Independent-Samples t- test was used as a between-groups design to analyze the control and experimental groups with respect to their performance on fluency, vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation section of the speaking test. Additionally, the T- Test examined whether the mean values of the test performance for the control group differed significantly from the mean value of the test variable for the experimental group.

First, assumptions underlying the Independent-Samples t- test were examined. It was assessed through an examination of the design of the study. After examining the assumption of independence, the assumption of normality was also assessed for the distributions through computing trimmed means and Skewness and Kurtosis. Next, the equality of the variances of the test scores in the two populations was also inspected. The Levene's F Test for Equality of Variances was used to test the assumption of homogeneity of the variances. For the Levene's test, the level of significance was set a priori for the T- Test analysis ($\alpha = .05$) to test the assumption of homogeneity of variance.

Over a period of almost 12 weeks (21 sessions of instruction and two sessions for pre-test and post-test the researcher administered the FCE speaking pre-test as a sample of speaking proficiency test for both experimental and control groups and the end of the study the FCE speaking post-test was administered to find out which group performed more efficiently.

The participants' performances were scored according to ILETS Assessment, 0 up to 9. The participants' performances were scored separately in terms of vocabulary, fluency, grammar, and pronunciation. Each of them scored 0 up to 9 and then the mean of them calculated as an overall speaking score. Then, the participants' scores were calculated and subjected to the statistical analysis using SPSS.

RESULTS

Examining the Normality Assumption

Tests of normality were produced through the Explore command in SPSS to test whether the levels of the speaking scores were statistically normal. Table 1 highlighted the relationship between these distributions and showed the normal distribution of these variables, too.

Since the trimmed means were similar to the original means, the scores for the levels of the speaking tests were considered to be normally distributed. Moreover, the values of Skewness and kurtosis were within the range of (+2) indicating the uniformity of the distributions.

Table 1. Statistics for the Speaking Tests

	Groups	Mean	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		5% Trimmed Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound				
Total pretest scores	control	2.57	2.35	2.79	2.56	.46	.06	-1.12
	experimental	2.55	2.15	2.95	2.54	.85	.08	-.90
Total posttest scores	control	3.05	2.77	3.33	3.05	.60	-.05	-.11
	experimental	5.14	4.80	5.48	5.16	.73	-.48	.27
lexical (pretest)	control	2.38	2.20	2.57	2.37	.39	.26	-.49
	experimental	2.55	2.10	2.99	2.55	.94	.22	-1.31
lexical (posttest)	control	3.01	2.72	3.30	3.00	.61	.27	-.15
	experimental	5.06	4.72	5.40	5.06	.72	-.03	.16
fluency (pretest)	control	2.57	2.26	2.88	2.58	.66	.01	-1.06
	experimental	2.45	2.01	2.90	2.42	.96	.49	-.85
fluency (posttest)	control	3.03	2.70	3.37	3.03	.71	-.14	-.67
	experimental	5.53	5.17	5.89	5.56	.76	-.63	.85
grammar (pretest)	control	2.46	2.27	2.65	2.45	.40	.05	-.71
	experimental	2.22	1.89	2.55	2.21	.71	.33	-1.04
grammar (posttest)	control	2.91	2.65	3.17	2.91	.55	-.24	-.92
	experimental	4.59	4.28	4.90	4.60	.65	-.21	.86
pronunciation (pretest)	control	2.85	2.58	3.13	2.83	.58	.583	-.86
	experimental	2.96	2.23	3.70	2.84	1.5	1.49	2.41
pronunciation (posttest)	control	3.25	2.94	3.57	3.25	.67	-.10	.08
	experimental	5.39	4.95	5.82	5.41	.92	-.30	.05

Inter-rater Reliability Analysis for the Speaking Test scores

The consistency of the two raters' evaluations was measured, using correlation analysis that indicated a comparatively high level of inter-rater reliability index for the speaking test scores. The established reliability indices for the two raters in the pre-test was (r pre-test = .808), that for the post-test scores equaled (r post-test = .98)

The Reliability of the Speaking Test

The reliability of the speaking test was estimated by test- retest method through administering the test to the pilot study group twice and the correlation between these two sets of scores was computed. In using test- retest reliability analysis, the assumption was that no significant change takes place in the examinees' knowledge during a short time interval between the two administrations (one week). The coefficient of correlation that was the reliability estimate is presented in the following table.

Table 2. Correlations between First and Second Administration of the Speaking Test

		Total rater B pretest	Total rater B posttest
Total rater A pretest	Pearson Correlation	.808**	-
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	-
	N	-	40
Total rater A posttest	Pearson Correlation	-	.989**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	-	.000
	N	-	40

Thus, the results showed that the association between the two administrations of the speaking was strong ($r = .639$), according to Cohen's (1988)).

The Research Questions

RQ1: Does using the short-story retelling technique improve the Iranian intermediate EFL learners' speaking skill?

Table 3. Group Statistics for the Total Speaking Test Scores

	groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Total pretest scores	control	20	2.5718	.46757	.10455
	experimental	20	2.5512	.85275	.19068
Total posttest scores	control	20	3.0567	.60375	.13500
	experimental	20	5.1466	.73332	.16397

The means of the two groups were somehow the same for the pre-test scores. However, for the post-test scores, the means for the two groups looked somewhat different. Thus, T- Test was run to examine if the differences between the groups were due to chance.

Table 4. Independent Samples Test for the Total Speaking Test Scores

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper	
pretest scores	Equal variances assumed	8.9	.005	.09	38	.92	.02	.21	-.41	.46
	Equal variances not assumed			.09	29.4	.92	.02	.21	-.42	.46
posttest scores	Equal variances assumed	.34	.56	-9.8	38	.00	-2.08	.21	-2.51	-1.65
	Equal variances not assumed			-9.8	36.6	.00	-2.08	.21	-2.52	-1.65

As concerns the pre-test scores, since Levene's F is statistically significant (Sig., $p < .05$), then variances were significantly different, and the assumption of equal variances was violated. Consequently, the *Equal variances not assumed* line was used. In fact, the t, df, and Sig. were adjusted as appropriate.

For the post-test scores, since F test was not significant, the assumption was not violated. In other words, the assumption was met, and as a result, the Equal variances

assumed line for the *t* test was used. Therefore, for the post-test scores, using alpha level of .05, the independent-samples *t* -test was conducted to evaluate whether the two groups differed significantly on speaking test. The test was significant, $t(38) = 9.8, p < .01, d = .31$. The 95% confidence interval for the speaking test mean ranged from -2.51 to -1.65. The examination of the group means indicated that experimental group ($M = 5.14, SD = .73$) performed significantly higher on the speaking test than did the control group ($M = 3.05, SD = .603$).

RQ 1a: Does using the short-story retelling technique improve the Iranian intermediate EFL learners' speaking in terms of vocabulary?

Table 5. Group Statistics for the Vocabulary Section of the Speaking Test

	groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Total lexical (pretest)	control	20	2.3880	.39730	.08884
	experimental	20	2.5500	.94357	.21099
Total lexical (posttest)	control	20	3.0155	.61790	.13817
	experimental	20	5.0655	.72947	.16311

Concerning the results of the pre-test, the means of the two groups on lexical section of the speaking test were nearly the same at the beginning of the study. Through examining the group means for the lexical category of the post-test, it could be inferred that experimental group with a mean of ($M= 5.06$) and standard deviation of ($SD= .72$) performed better on the lexical section of the test than did the control group with a mean of ($M=3.01$) and standard deviation of ($SD= .61$).

Table 6. Independent Samples Test for the Vocabulary Section of the Speaking Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. 2-tailed	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper	
lexical (pretest)	Equal variances assumed	21.05	.00	-.70	38	.48	-.16	.22	-.62	.30
	Equal variances not assumed			-.70	25.5	.48	-.16	.22	-.63	.30
lexical (posttest)	Equal variances assumed	.42	.51	-9.5	38	.00	-2.05	.21	-2.48	-1.61
	Equal variances not assumed			-9.5	36.9	.00	-2.05	.21	-2.48	-1.61

For the lexical category of the pre-test, the F value for Levene's test was (21.05) with a Sig. (p) value of .00 ($p < .05$). Because the Sig. value was less than alpha of .05 ($p < .05$), the null hypothesis for the assumption of homogeneity of variance was rejected and it was concluded that there was a significant difference between the two groups' variances. That is, the assumption of homogeneity of variance was not met. Since the assumption of homogeneity of variance was not met, the data results associated with the "Equal variances not assumed," was used which takes into account the Cochran & Cox (1957) adjustment for the standard error of the estimate and the Satterthwaite (1946) adjustment for the degrees of freedom. In other words, the bottom line of the t - test for equality of means results table was used and the top line of information was ignored. Moreover, since $n_1 = n_2$ and the size of each sample was equal, the t- test was used without appreciable error despite moderate violations of the normality.

However, for the post-test scores, the Sig. (p) value was greater than the priori alpha level. Thus, the null hypothesis was retained and it was concluded that there was not a significant difference between the two groups' variances. Since the assumption of homogeneity of variance was met, the data results associated with the "Equal variances assumed," was used for interpreting the data. That is, the top line of information for the t- test was used. Testing the difference between the two groups on the lexical section of the speaking test, since the T value for the post-test scores came to (-9.5), it indicated that the experimental group was higher than the control group. It was resulted in a Sig. (p) value that was less than alpha of .05 ($p < .05$). It was concluded that the two groups differed significantly on their speaking test performance with respect to the lexical section.

RQ 1b: Does using the short-story retelling technique improve the Iranian intermediate EFL learners' speaking in terms of fluency?

Table 7. Group Statistics for the Fluency Aspect of the Speaking Test

	groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Total fluency pretest	control	20	2.5758	.66994	.14980
	experimental	20	2.4598	.96025	.21472
Total fluency posttest	control	20	3.0382	.71693	.16031
	experimental	20	5.5343	.76102	.17017

Regarding the results of pre-test, the means of the two groups in terms of fluency of the speaking test were nearly similar. Through examining the group means for the fluency aspect of the post-test, it was noticed that the experimental group with a mean of ($M= 5.53$) and standard deviation of ($SD= .76$) performed better on the fluency aspect of the test than did the control group with a mean of ($M=3.03$) and standard deviation of ($SD= .71$).

Table 8. Independent Samples Test for the Fluency Aspect of the Speaking Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower		Upper
fluency pretest	Equal variances assumed	4.51	.04	.44	38	.66	.11	.26	-.41	.64
	Equal variances not assumed			.44	33.9	.66	.11	.26	-.41	.64
fluency posttest	Equal variances assumed	.31	.58	-10.6	38	.00	-2.49	.23	-2.96	-2.02
	Equal variances not assumed			-10.6	37.8	.00	-2.49	.23	-2.96	-2.02

For the fluency section of the pre-test, the F value for Levene's test was (4.51) with a Sig. (p) value of .04 ($p < .05$). Since the Sig. value was lower than alpha of .05 ($p < .05$), the assumption of homogeneity of variance was not met. As a result, the data results associated with the "Equal variances not assumed," was used. Since $t(33.9) = 0.66$ indicating that there was no significant difference between the two groups with respect to their performance on fluency aspect of the speaking test on pre-test.

However, for the post-test scores, the Sig. (p) value for the Leven's test was greater than the priori alpha level. Thus, the null hypothesis was retained and it was concluded that there was not a significant difference between the two groups' variances and the data results associated with the "Equal variances assumed," was used for interpreting the data. Testing the difference between the two groups on the fluency section of the speaking test, since the t value for the post-test scores came to (-10.6), it pointed out that the experimental group was higher than the control group. It was resulted in a Sig. (p) value that was less than alpha of .05 ($p < .05$). It was concluded that the two groups differed significantly on their speaking test performance with respect to the fluency.

RQ 1c: Does using the short-story retelling technique improve the Iranian intermediate EFL learners' speaking in terms of grammar?

Table 9. Group Statistics for the Grammar Section of the Speaking Test

	groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Total grammar pretest	control	20	2.4638	.40989	.09165
	experimental	20	2.2253	.71456	.15978
Total grammar posttest	control	20	2.9145	.55353	.12377
	experimental	20	4.5950	.65876	.14730

For the speaking test that was administered at the beginning of the study, the mean scores for the grammar section of the test for the experimental and control groups were ($M= 2.46$) and ($M= 2.22$), respectively. Furthermore, the standard deviation for the experimental group was slightly higher than that of the control group ($SD_{experimental\ group} = .71$; $SD_{control\ group} = .40$). However, for the post-test of speaking, the mean scores for the grammar section of the test for the experimental and control groups were ($M= 4.59$) and ($M= 2.91$), respectively. Furthermore, the standard deviation for the experimental group was slightly higher than that of the control group ($SD_{experimental\ group} = .65$; $SD_{control\ group} = .55$). It was noticed that the experimental group with a mean of ($M= 4.59$) and standard deviation of ($SD= .65$) performed better on the grammar aspect of the test than did the control group with a mean of ($M=2.91$) and standard deviation of ($SD= .55$).

Table 10. Independent Samples Test for the Grammar Section of the Speaking Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper	
grammar pretest	Equal variances assumed	7.6	.009	1.2	38	.20	.23	.18	-.13	.61
	Equal variances not assumed			1.2	30.2	.20	.23	.18	-.13	.61
grammar posttest	Equal variances assumed	.04	.84	-8.7	38	.00	-1.68	.19	-2.07	-1.29
	Equal variances not assumed			-8.7	36.9	.00	-1.68	.19	-2.07	-1.29

The Independent-Samples T-Test was conducted to compare the performance on grammar section of pre-test of speaking for the two groups. There was no significant difference in scores for *Experimental group* ($M = 2.22$, $SD = .71$) and *control group* ($M = 2.46$, $SD = .40$; $t(30.2) = 1.2$, $p = .20$, two-tailed). In other words, the two groups were approximately at the same level of proficiency in terms of their grammar in the administered speaking test at the beginning of the study. For the post-test scores, the Independent Samples Test presented the results of Levene's test for equality of variances. This tested whether the variance (variation) of scores for the two groups was the same. Since the Sig. value for Levene's test was larger than (.05), the first line in the table, which referred to Equal variances assumed, was used.

In Table 10 above, the significance level for Levene's test was (.84). This was larger than the cut-off of (.05). This meant that the assumption of equal variances had not been violated. Since the value in the Sig. (2-tailed) column was less than .05, there was a significant difference in the mean scores on the dependent variable (grammar section on post-test) for each of the two groups. In this study, the Sig. (2-tailed) value was (.00). As this value was lower than the required cut-off of (.05), it could be concluded that there was a statistically significant difference in the mean of post-test of grammar section of the speaking test for the *Experimental group and control group*. It was concluded that the two groups differed significantly on their speaking test performance with respect to the grammar.

RQ 1d: Does using the short-story retelling technique improve the Iranian intermediate EFL learners' speaking in terms of pronunciation?

Table 11. Group Statistics for the Pronunciation Section of the Speaking Test

	groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
pronunciation pretest	control	20	2.8598	.58203	.13015
	experimental	20	2.9698	1.56781	.35057
pronunciation posttest	control	20	3.2585	.67068	.14997
	experimental	20	5.3915	.92627	.20712

For the speaking test that was given at the beginning of the study, the mean scores for the pronunciation section of the test for the experimental and control groups were ($M=2.96$) and ($M=2.85$), respectively. Furthermore, the standard deviation for the experimental group was slightly higher than that of the control group ($SD_{experimental\ group} = 1.56$; $SD_{control\ group} = .58$). However, for the post-test of speaking, the mean scores for the pronunciation section of the test for the experimental and control groups were ($M=5.39$) and ($M=3.25$), respectively. Furthermore, the standard deviation for the experimental group was somewhat higher than that of the control group ($SD_{experimental\ group} = .92$; $SD_{control\ group} = .67$). It was noticed that the experimental group with a mean of ($M=5.39$) and standard deviation of ($SD=.92$) performed better on the pronunciation aspect of the test than did the control group with a mean of ($M=3.25$) and standard deviation of ($SD=.67$).

The Independent-Samples t-test (Table 12) was conducted to compare the pronunciation scores for the two groups at the beginning of the study. There was no significant difference in scores for the experimental group ($M=2.96$, $SD=1.56$) and the control group ($M=2.85$, $SD=0.58$; $t(24.1) = -2.9$, $p = .77$, two-tailed). For the post-test scores, using an alpha level of .05, independent-samples t-test was conducted to evaluate whether the average scores on pronunciation section of the speaking test differed significantly. The test for the post-test scores was significant, $t(38) = -8.3$, $p < .05$. An examination of the group means indicated that students in the experimental group ($M=5.39$, $SD=.92$) scored significantly higher than the students in the control group condition ($M=3.25$, $SD=.67$). The following figure illustrates the comparison between the two groups on different levels of pre and post-test of speaking.

Table 12. Independent Samples Test for the Pronunciation Section of the Speaking Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower		Upper
pronunciation pretest	Equal variances assumed	5.7	.02	-.29	38	.77	-.11	.37	-.86	.64
	Equal variances not assumed			-.29	24.1	.77	-.11	.37	-.88	.66
pronunciation posttest	Equal variances assumed	1.4	.23	-8.3	38	.00	-2.13	.25	-2.65	-1.61
	Equal variances not assumed			-8.3	34.6	.000	-2.13	.25	-2.65	-1.61

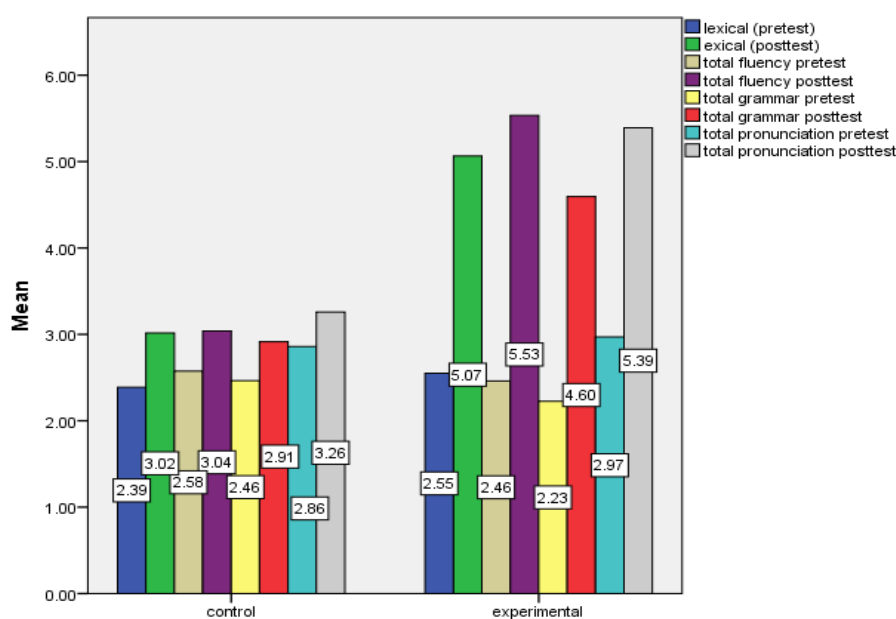


Figure 1. The Comparison between the Means of the Two Groups on four levels of the speaking test

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to investigate the possible effects of short-story retelling on Iranian intermediate EFL learners' speaking skill. Overall, the findings confirmed that short-story retelling techniques does enhance EFL learners' speaking skill. The results show that using the short-story retelling technique improves the Iranian intermediate EFL

learners' speaking in terms of vocabulary, fluency, pronunciation and grammar. The results shed light on what and how to teach speaking in EFL classes. First and foremost, like numerous studies (Aliakbari & Mohsennejad, 2014; Moosavinia, 2011; Pinandhita, 2011), which supported the use of story retelling in EFL classes which can improve students' speaking ability.

Speaking is an important skill in communication. One of the main problems that learners of English as foreign language (EFL) confront is how to improve their ability to speak fluently. This is actually the concern of both EFL learners and teachers in Iran since it has a significant role in communication. The results will help EFL learners improve their speaking skill by the suggested techniques. It will help teachers promote their students' speaking skill and find the most important points that help students enhance their performance in taking speaking tests. This study is useful for both the learners and teachers. The advantage of this study for EFL teachers is to make them familiar with this technique to enhance EFL learners' speaking skill. Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that teachers use short-story retelling as a part of their instruction to help students improve their speaking ability more.

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