
Unveiling the Advantages and Disadvantages of Chain Stories with Visual Media in Speaking Activities based on Students' Experiences

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ABSTRACT

In Indonesia, where English is learned as a foreign language, speaking is often considered one of the most challenging skills for students to develop. Many students struggle to effectively convey their ideas during speaking activities, frequently feeling uncertain about what to say, which creates a desire for a more engaging and enjoyable learning process. To address this challenge, teachers need to be adept at creating fun and interactive learning experiences, such as utilizing the chain stories technique. The combination of learning techniques with media plays a crucial role in enhancing the speaking-focused English learning experience. This research aims to explore the advantages and disadvantages of using chain stories with visual media in speaking activities, based on students' experiences. A descriptive case study method is employed, with four students from an English course in Tasikmalaya participating in semi-structured interviews. Data is analyzed using thematic analysis. The findings reveal three key advantages of the chain stories approach: increased student motivation, enhanced self-confidence, and its suitability as a recommended learning technique for English classes. However, two disadvantages also emerged: technical problems and knowledge-related challenges during implementation. These insights can assist teachers in weighing the benefits and limitations of using chain stories with visual media as a tool to improve students' speaking skills and enhance the overall English teaching and learning process, particularly in speaking-focused activities.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Speaking is one of the crucial skills to be able to communicate with other people and to build relationships with each other. Mantra et al. (2019) stated that speaking is essential in a person's life, and it allows someone to interact with another person. Then, one of the benefits of speaking is to communicate someone's opinions and emotions. Akhter (2021) stated that speaking is necessary to express ideas and people also can share their problems with others. Moreover, someone utilizes these crucial skills during their work or when they are having fun, and so on. Someone also gets to understand one another better when they

communicate well. So, the function of speaking skills is to express ideas, feelings, and problems spontaneously orally.

However, students often have difficulty conveying ideas or opinions when carrying out speaking activities because they are confused about what to talk about. So, they need interesting ways to get better at learning English, especially in speaking. One of the interesting techniques for learning English, especially speaking, is chain stories that involve visual media. Teachers and students can occasionally use their illustrations to express themselves imaginatively. As a result, it was hypothesized that visual media may be used to assist students in overcoming obstacles and improving their speaking skills.

A chain story is one of the activities of creating stories spontaneously which is carried out in groups and the story continues from one person to another. Chain story is a technique in speaking activities where the teacher provides five pictures that are related to each other. Then, the first student who is appointed must create a story based on picture A, then the story is continued by the second student based on picture B, and so on up to the fifth student. The implementation of this technique is intended to raise students' courage in speaking. If students have shown courage, it is hoped that their speaking skills will improve (Nurhalimah, 2020). Uktolseja and Gaspersz (2019) also stated that teachers should be enthusiastic, full of energy, and take a learner-centered approach. So, to ensure that the learning process runs smoothly, and the learning objectives are achieved, accuracy in the technique selection is necessary. The chain story will fulfill the demand for it when it comes to teaching speaking skills to actively use English. According to Rohmah et al. (2023), one of the English learning techniques that can be applied to oral and writing skills is chain stories. Many students collaborate to write a chain story. Also, many students give a chain story verbally while speaking. Additionally, it can be utilized to simultaneously enhance reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills. The use of chain stories helps the students in gaining inspiration for their own stories from the other students' work. Then, a chain story is one strategy for obtaining people to talk in an entertaining way (Nirmalasari, 2022).

This study seeks to examine the advantages and disadvantages of using chain stories with visual media in speaking activities. Previous research has not examined the advantages and disadvantages of using chain stories with visual media but only examined the effectiveness of chain stories. Consequently, this study aims to investigate the advantages and disadvantages of using chain stories with visual media in speaking activities.

II. METHODS

This research uses a case study methodology. Yin (2018) defined a case study as an empirical method that broadly examines a contemporary event, called a "case", within a real-world framework. This is especially useful when the boundaries between the phenomenon and its setting are unclear. Moreover, Yin (2014) stated a descriptive case study is the type of case study that is used to describe an intervention or phenomenon and the real-life context in which it occurred. The researcher chose a case study research approach because of its ability to describe phenomena comprehensively based on factual evidence obtained from the field. This research examined the advantages and disadvantages of chain stories with visual media in speaking activities.

The selected participants in this research were four female members or students of ELC (English Learning Club). The participants' ages ranged from twenty to twenty-two. Four participants were selected based on their experience in practicing chain stories with

visual media. The researcher established the following criteria namely having experience practicing chain stories with visual media in speaking activities during the first four meetings of the first period when they have just entered this course.

The researcher employed interviews as a means of data collection in this investigation. The selected interview format was semi-structured (Adara & Haqiyah, 2021; Andriani et al., 2023; Tavory, 2020). Megaldi and Berler (2020) defined the semi-structured interview as an exploratory interview that allows the researchers to get deep for discovery. The researcher employed interviews to acquire meaningful experiences into the advantages and disadvantages of using chain stories with visual media in speaking activities. The interview questions primarily obeyed the interview guide determined by the author. The research included a multiple-interview approach to validate the data and identify drawbacks in the initial interview. The interview sessions were audio-recorded using the researcher's mobile phone. The researcher conducted this research in Indonesian, transcribed the data, and then translated it.

The data of this research is analyzed by using Thematic Analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The analysis consists of six stages: familiarizing with the data, generating initial codes, looking for themes, reviewing prospective themes, defining, and naming themes, and generating a manuscript. During the analysis phases, the data is carefully reviewed and examined several times to become familiarized with the data, considering the aim of the research. Furthermore, the data encountered coding to assign labels and guide them based on their thematic relevance. Moreover, the data were arranged and classified into several topics. Subsequently, the content is reviewed and named to provide readers with a clear understanding of the themes.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Advantages of Chain Stories with Visual Media in Speaking Activities

1) Increasing Students' Motivation in Speaking Activities

Using chain story techniques with visual media in speaking activities effectively increases students' motivation in speaking activities (Fitriani & Hambali, 2019; Rohmah et al., 2023). As the chain stories technique with visual media made the learning process more interesting, students were more motivated to do speaking activities. Moreover, chain stories with visual media made the students enjoy, engaged, and enthusiastic in the classroom because they were interested in the learning technique provided by the teacher. As stated by the following participants:

Excerpt 1

The use of chain stories with visual media makes me more active and motivated in speaking activities because the visualization helps me to get involved in speaking activities. (Interview transcript, 03-02-2024. Participant 1. Translated by the author).

Using chain stories with visual media can make the activity more active and motivate me to get involved in it. (Interview transcript, 08-02-2024. Participant 2. Translated by the author).

Based on the statement above, P1 said that the use of the chain stories technique with visual media can increase her motivation and involvement in speaking activities because visualization has an important role in it. A similar finding was found in the previous study conducted by Fitri et al. (2023), which stated that the chain story technique can increase students' motivation, involvement, and interest in the teaching and learning process.

Similarly, P2 said using the chain stories technique with visual media could motivate her to speak in front of the class so that speaking activities become more active and livelier. She also added that after doing the speaking activity using chain stories with visual media, she found that the learning process felt more impressive because she could continue the story, so she felt successful in passing the speaking activity well. This is related to the research conducted by Adnan et al. (2023), which stated that the use of interesting learning techniques is one way to overcome students' difficulties in learning English, especially speaking activities. One of these learning techniques is chain stories. This chain of stories can be applied in English learning activities, especially speaking activities.

Excerpt 2

I find it easy to create a story when practicing chain stories because there is visual media and I can get keywords from that. So, it makes me motivated to get involved in speaking activities. (Interview transcript, 19-02-2024. Participant 3. Translated by the author).

So, using chain stories with visual media makes me motivated to get involved. In essence, I can get clues from the pictures given to create a story. (Interview transcript, 24-02-2024. Participant 4. Translated by the author).

Similar responses were also conveyed by P3 and P4. They agreed that speaking activities using chain stories with visual media can motivate them to be more actively involved in speaking. Besides, P3 added that the use of chain stories with visual media meant that her ideas in creating a story could be developed and communicated. This is in line with the statement of Adnan et al. (2023) who stated that the advantages of the chain story method are; (1) Arouses students' motivation to get involved in speaking activities, and (2) Makes students more imaginative in creating stories. Moreover, P4 also added that using chain stories with visual media makes the story freer to interpret and she can get clues from the available pictures.

2) Increasing Students' Self-Confidence during Speaking Activities

The participants indicated that doing speaking activities using the chain stories technique with visual media could help them increase their self-confidence (Bosch et al., 2021; Parr et al., 2021; Yaacob et al., 2021). They mentioned that visual media effectively helped them increase their self-confidence. Wulandari et al., (2019) stated that the reason for using the chain story technique in the classroom is because students will gain confidence in speaking English and enjoy the teaching and learning process through chain stories. Apart from that, chain stories with visual media can also help them to be able to speak up without any doubts (Corujo-Vélez et al., 2021; Moldavan et al., 2021; Şendağ et al., 2018; Zen et al., 2021). The evidence is presented in the following italicized excerpts:

Excerpt 3

I felt the benefits, namely feeling more confident in speaking because visual media can be a reference to create a story. (Interview transcript, 03-02-2024. Participant 1. Translated by the author).

Chain stories can also help increase my level of confidence in speaking because there are several pictures as an overview. (Interview transcript, 08-02-2024. Participant 2. Translated by the author).

P1 claimed that she felt the benefits of chain stories technique when using visual media, namely she could be more confident in speaking up in front of her friends because there are visual media as a reference, so she did not feel confused in creating a story. Then, P2 also agreed that chain stories using visual media can help her to increase her level of confidence in speaking because the available pictures can be an overview to create a story. She also added that after doing speaking activities using chain stories with visual media, she found the learning process felt more impressive because she was able to do these speaking activities and she also was able to train her self-confidence when speaking, so she felt successful in passing the speaking activity well (Meletiadou, 2022; Mirza, 2020; Thahira, Cut Shafira, Fitriani, 2023). Fitriani and Hambali (2019) stated that chain stories can help students increase their self-confidence in speaking and make it easier for them to speak in front of their classmates.

Excerpt 4

In my opinion, it is very helpful in increasing my self-confidence, so I don't feel doubtful when I convey the stories I have created. (Interview transcript, 19-02-2024. Participant 3. Translated by the author).

I felt my self-confidence increase slightly after using this learning technique in speaking activities. Then, I feel no doubt in conveying the story I have created. (Interview transcript, 24-02-2024. Participant 4. Translated by the author).

Furthermore, P3 and P4 said that their self-confidence increased after using chain stories with visual media because the available pictures made them no doubt in conveying the stories they had created. This is in line with the statement of Wulandari et al. (2019), chain story technique aims to give students the freedom to consider their words without worrying too much about what to say. In addition, P3 added that the learning environment becomes exciting because during speaking activities using chain stories involving visual media, there is no fear of conveying opinions, and the process is more enjoyable and lively. A similar finding was found in the study conducted by Fitriani and Hambali (2019), which stated that the chain stories technique allows students to create their own stories and let other students continue the first story based on their version. Besides, chain stories can be used to develop students' fluency and make them not hesitate to convey the ideas they have created. Additionally, chain stories also provide students with possibilities for developing their imaginations.

3) Chain Stories as a Suggested Learning Technique to be Implemented in English Classes

P1 stated that she had implemented chain stories again with junior high school students and the activity was effective. Apart from that, she also practiced this technique at her home, but in the form of a writing activity, not a speaking activity anymore. Furthermore, P2 and P4 also practiced the chain stories technique at their home. If P2 practices it in the form of a writing activity, which is like P1, P4 still practices it in the form of a speaking activity. Then, P2 also stated that she was interested in implementing this chain stories technique with students if one day she became a teacher.

In contrast to the third participant (P3), she stated that she has not practiced the chain stories technique at her home, but she was interested in implementing it in an English class if one day she taught. More specific evidence is presented in the following italicized excerpts:

Excerpt 5

Apart from that, I have also implemented chain stories in English class, and it turned out to be effective for junior high school students because the activity is quite easy and doesn't get boring. The chain stories technique is also my reference material for teaching at school, especially in speaking activities. (Interview transcript, 03-02-2024. Participant 1. Translated by the author).

Based on the statement above, P1 had an interesting experience in implementing the chain stories technique, where she had implemented this technique in an English class with junior high school students. Then, she said that the activity ran effectively, even though at first, she was doubtful and afraid that the activity would make it difficult for students, but the chain stories is an easy technique to implement. In addition, she also agreed that chain stories would be one of her references for teaching English, especially speaking activities so that she could create a fun and lively learning atmosphere (Ahmad Latif Mahruf & Sari, 2022; Gürsoy, 2021; Kristiani & Pradnyadewi, 2021). In line with the research conducted by Uktolseja and Gaspersz (2019), which stated that the chain story technique helps students to learn in groups but not passively and remains effective, because students will learn how to string words together slowly to create a story where they can remember every sentence.

Excerpt 6

I have been practicing the chain stories technique again at home, but it's more like a writing activity, not speaking, but it works. (Interview transcript, 03-02-2024. Participant 1. Translated by the author).

However, after several weeks of using chain stories in the course, I put it back into practice in my home. Then, I tried to create a story spontaneously and I succeeded in making one complete story, but in the form of writing activities. (Interview transcript, 08-02-2024. Participant 2. Translated by the author).

Apart from that, she also re-practiced this chain stories technique at home, but in the form of writing activity and it was also successful in producing a good story until the end. She also stated that although chain stories with visual media were practiced again with a different activity namely writing, it was successful. P2 also stated that she had also practiced the chain stories technique at her home and in the form of a writing

activity. She is also interested in implementing the chain stories technique in English classes if one day she becomes a teacher because the chain story is an interesting learning technique and quite easy to implement. Furthermore, Fitriani and Hambali (2019) also have a similar opinion, stating that chain story is one of the interesting learning techniques to be implemented in speaking classes. Moreover, P4 also had the same experience as the two previous participants, namely P1 and P2, where she had also practiced the chain stories technique at her home, but still in the form of a speaking activity. In addition, she also said that this activity was very fun and she was very satisfied with the results because she could create a complete story. Rohmah et al. (2023) also stated that the use of chain stories in speaking activities is fun. This also makes the class livelier because each student can convey their ideas to create a story.

Excerpt 7

Based on my experience, chain stories can be a new idea and maybe one day I can implement it in class when I teach. (Interview transcript, 19-02-2024. Participant 3. Translated by the author).

Unlike the three previous participants (P1, P2, and P4), P3 hadn't practiced the chain stories technique at home, but she was very interested in implementing the chain stories technique in English classes when she taught later. This is related to the research conducted by Ramadani et al. (2022). The findings indicate that the chain story technique is an interesting learning technique and suitable to be implemented in English classes.

The Disadvantages of Chain Stories with Visual Media in Speaking Activities

1) Technical Problems during Practicing Chain Stories with Visual Media

Two participants, P1 and P2, stated that they experienced several technical problems during practicing chain stories with visual media in speaking activities, namely they were required to be able to think fast to run effectively from the first person to the last. Likewise, the other two participants, P3 and P4, experienced the same thing, but the case was different from P1 and P2, lack of clarity in teacher instructions, meaning that the teacher did not give clear instructions, so they felt confused about moving the chain story. More specific evidence is presented in the following italicized excerpts:

Excerpt 8

The challenge in chain stories is I have to think fast and am required to be precise and by the pictures. (Interview transcript, 03-02-2024. Participant 1. Translated by the author).

The story that I created was in English, so it was quite mind-numbing because I had to spontaneously and quickly create a sentence that matched the pictures. (Interview transcript, 08-02-2024. Participant 2. Translated by the author).

P1 claimed that the chain stories technique had its challenges for her, namely during practice she had to think quickly and was required to be precise or following the pictures given. As Wulandari et al. (2019) stated that the challenge of using the chain stories technique is students must think fast to create stories based on the pictures. P1 then also explained that at first, she felt confused because she didn't know how to practice chain

stories with visual media, but after the teacher explained how to practice it, she finally understood.

In addition, the second participant (P2) had the same challenge when practicing chain stories with visual media, namely that she had to be able to think fast in creating stories so that the process was effective. Novitasari (2019) also has a similar opinion, she claimed that in using chain stories, students are also trained to think fast and spontaneously because the technique uses limited time.

Excerpt 9

I was a little confused when I first started practicing chain stories because I didn't understand what the teacher was explaining. (Interview transcript, 19-02-2024. Participant 3. Translated by the author).

I didn't get clarity from the teacher's instructions, so I was confused about what to do. (Interview transcript, 24-02-2024. Participant 4. Translated by the author).

P3 and P4 had different experiences from the previous two participants (P1 and P2). They mentioned that the challenges they faced regarding the use of chain stories with visual media in speaking activities were related to the teacher's instructions. These two participants (P3 and P4) did not understand and did not get clarity from what was conveyed by the teacher regarding the steps for carrying out the chain stories technique with visual media. Research conducted by Nurhalimah (2020) indicated that the chain story also has disadvantages, one of which is that teachers must ensure that students understand how to practice this technique, so this activity does not waste time.

2) Knowledge Problems during Practicing Chain Stories with Visual Media

Two participants, namely P2 and P4 stated that they experienced problems regarding knowledge problems during practicing chain stories with visual media in speaking activities, namely they were required to be able to master several vocabularies. In addition, they also experienced another problem in practicing chain stories with visual media, namely they found difficulty in interpreting the available pictures due to a lack of vocabulary mastery. More specific evidence is presented in the following italicized excerpts:

Excerpt 10

Moreover, this activity can also be a challenge for me because I have to master vocabulary so that I have difficulty in interpreting the pictures. (Interview transcript, 08-02-2024. Participant 2. Translated by the author).

However, when I tried this activity at home, I experienced a few problems) and I also didn't master some vocabulary. So, I had a little difficulty interpreting the picture. (Interview transcript, 24-02-2024. Participant 4. Translated by the author).

P2 and P4 mentioned that this activity could also be a challenge for them because they must master vocabulary to be able to interpret the available pictures. It is in line with the research conducted by Achsani (2020). The findings indicated that the chain story technique can help students overcome their difficulties in learning English, especially the lack of fluency and pronunciation. Apart from that, students are also required to know some vocabulary to be able to practice this technique.

Based on the results of interviews with P2 and P4, they highlighted their challenges when using chain stories with visual media regarding knowledge problems. They stated that using the chain stories technique required them to master vocabulary because while creating stories in a short time, students had to think fast about what vocabulary had to appear to make a complete story. Meanwhile, P2 and P4 did not master a lot of vocabulary so they had a little difficulty interpreting the available pictures.

One of the key challenges highlighted is the requirement for students to have a strong command of vocabulary when engaging in the chain story technique. The spontaneous and collaborative nature of the activity demands that students think quickly about the appropriate vocabulary to include to construct a coherent and complete story. However, P2 and P4 indicated that they did not have a substantial vocabulary repertoire, which made it difficult for them to effectively interpret the available pictures and seamlessly weave the story. The lack of sufficient vocabulary knowledge poses a significant barrier for students when attempting to utilize the chain story approach with visual media. Without the necessary vocabulary, students may struggle to convey their ideas, express relevant concepts, and maintain the flow of the story as it is passed from one participant to the next. This challenge can hinder the overall effectiveness of the chain story technique in enhancing students' speaking skills.

To address this concern, educators may need to consider implementing strategies that prioritize vocabulary development and expansion prior to or alongside the use of chain stories with visual media (Andriani et al., 2021, 2022, 2024). This could involve activities focused on building students' lexical knowledge, such as vocabulary-building exercises, word games, or the introduction of thematic word banks related to the visual prompts used in the chain story activities. By ensuring that students have a strong foundation in relevant vocabulary, educators can empower them to engage more confidently and competently in the chain story process, leveraging the visual media to stimulate their creativity and fluency in spoken expression. Recognizing and addressing the knowledge and vocabulary challenges faced by students, as highlighted by P2 and P4, can inform the design and implementation of chain story activities, ultimately enhancing their effectiveness in improving students' speaking skills in the English language learning context.

IV. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

This research discussed the advantages and disadvantages of chain stories with visual media in speaking activities. Students felt the advantages and disadvantages while practicing chain stories with visual media because apart from chain stories being a learning technique that is easy to practice, this technique also has drawbacks. The gap in this research is that the previous research did not examine the advantages and disadvantages of using chain stories with visual media. Therefore, the researcher investigated the advantages and disadvantages of chain stories with visual media in speaking activities in one of the English courses in Tasikmalaya.

This research found that the advantages of chain stories with visual media in speaking activities included: 1) Increasing students' motivation in speaking activities, 2) Increasing students' self-confidence during speaking activities, and 3) Chain stories as a suggested learning technique to be implemented in English classes. Meanwhile, the disadvantages of chain stories with visual media in speaking activities included: 1) Technical problems during practicing chain stories, and 2) Knowledge problems during practicing chain stories.

Apart from the findings regarding the advantages and disadvantages of using chain stories with visual media as a learning technique during speaking activities, the researcher realizes that this research has several weaknesses, such as using a single data collection technique (for example semi-structured interviews), a small number of participants, and using a descriptive case study. Then, further research can use data collection using several techniques, such as interviews and observations to obtain more reliable and valid data. Moreover, involving more participants and taking participants from teachers and students from various levels is also highly recommended. Therefore, the advantages and disadvantages of chain stories with visual media based on students' experiences can be known from various levels and both sides, especially teachers and students.

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