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Retelling Yassawi's Hikmets: The impact on EFL students' English-speaking performance and vocabulary size

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ABSTRACT

This experimental study evaluates the effects of retelling Yassawi's hikmets on the speaking performance and vocabulary size of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learner. Sixty EFL students recruited from a university in Kazakhstan were asked to narrate monologues based on previously read hikmets of their choice during out-of-class meetings once a week over 10 weeks. The results reveal that this intervention significantly improved participants' speech fluency, lexical complexity and vocabulary size as opposed to their counterparts who did not engage in the retelling experience. However, the analysis of covariance revealed that only fluency and lexical complexity showed significant differences after controlling for the pre-test scores of these variables and vocabulary size. It was also found that pre-test vocabulary size and fluency had a moderating influence on post-test fluency. In a nutshell, retelling hikmets brought about gains in learners' vocabulary and speaking performance especially in terms of fluency. This evidence underscores the effectiveness of oral text reproduction exercises in improving the speaking abilities and vocabulary of EFL learners even when the recited text is out-of-date and not really engaging. The findings advance our understanding of effective language teaching methods and offer practical guidance for EFL teachers, curriculum developers and researchers.

Contribution/Originality: This paper contributes significantly to the limited research on the impact of retelling practice on English ability in tertiary EFL contexts. This is the first study to address the influence of folklore retelling on oral skills and vocabulary of university EFL students.

1. INTRODUCTION

Globalization has led to increased internationalization and mobility of people resulting in impressive metamorphoses (Le, Phan, & Vu, 2022) including a growing demand for English language proficiency worldwide (Pratiwi, Kuswoyo, Puspitasari, Juhana, & Bachtiar, 2024). English is one of the world's most popular languages and a global language for international communication, business, education and diplomacy. Consequently, teaching and learning English as a foreign language (EFL) has become a critical concern for countries worldwide. In Central

Asia, including Kazakhstan, English has become increasingly important in recent years owing to globalization the spread of the Internet and social media and the growing importance of international trade and diplomacy. Although Russian is still widely spoken in Kazakhstan because of its historical links to the former Soviet Union, English is rapidly becoming the language of choice for young people and professionals who want to succeed in the global economy. English is now taught in most schools and there are increasingly English-speaking universities, programs and international schools throughout the country. Language competence is also highly appreciated in Kazakhstan's job market especially in the finance, IT and tourism sectors where international communication and cooperation are essential. English plays an important role in the contemporary world and is becoming increasingly important in Central Asia and Kazakhstan. English proficiency will likely to be a valuable talent for people and nations in the future based on its continued growth and importance as a global language.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Importance of Speaking Skills in EFL Contexts

Proficiency in oral communication is crucial for learning English as a second language, especially for those who are learning it orally (Fuchs, Katzir, & Kahn-Horwitz, 2023). Speaking skills are essential in EFL contexts as they enable learners to communicate effectively with English speakers, express their ideas and opinions and engage in social and professional interactions. However, many EFL students struggle with speaking skills due to a lack of exposure to English-speaking environments, limited opportunities to practice speaking, anxiety and a lack of confidence (Huang, Li, Shu, & Zhang, 2022). Therefore, it is crucial to identify effective pedagogical strategies to enhance EFL students' speaking skills.

2.2. Retelling as a Pedagogical Strategy for Enhancing Speaking Skills

Retelling is a rehearsal technique that implies summarizing or recounting an event or information that has previously been heard or read using one's own words. Retelling is also determined as a means intended to explore "how well a student has comprehended a specific story" (Janan, 2022). This rehearsal is supposed to build up vocabulary, recall and fluency when delivering material in a public setting. It is feasible to develop more effective communication and enhance speaking performance by practicing and repeating the topic. The speaker's objectives, the audience and the social environment can all have an impact on how they remember and narrate the story compared to recall which is needed for the retrieval of specific details from memory (Marsh, 2007). Retelling is commonly used in language learning settings where learners are asked to retell stories or information they have heard or read to practice their speaking skills and develop their ability to organize and express their thoughts in the target language.

2.3. Problem Statement

Cumulative empirical evidence suggests a significant challenge in the effectiveness of spoken communication among EFL learners (Asratie, Wale, & Aylet, 2023). However, there remains a dearth of studies examining the impact of retelling on the oral proficiency of EFL students particularly those at the university level. Existing studies on this topic are not only limited in number but also often lack sufficient quality. For instance, Rachmawaty and Hermagustiana's (2010) study fails to provide essential details regarding participants and research context, indicative of subpar quality although the paper is published in a journal that is currently indexed in Scopus. Surprisingly, there is not more research on this topic considering how relevant it is right now and how obvious it is that better language acquisition strategies are needed. The scarcity of research on this subject is surprising given its topical relevance and the evident need for effective language learning methodologies.

Furthermore, lexical knowledge is recognized as one of the essential dimensions of language learning (Ebadi, Nozari, & Salman, 2022; Khatoon, Sanif, & Saleem, 2023). English vocabulary size is a crucial response variable to

consider when examining the impact of retelling activities on EFL learners' proficiency as it addresses a significant problem faced by many language learners today. One major issue is that many EFL students struggle to learn and retain new words and expressions which can impede their overall language proficiency and fluency (Hawari, Al-Shboul, & Huwari, 2022). A recent cross-sectional study (Kong, Molnár, & Xu, 2022) inferred that even in-service teachers with teaching experience of one to 27 years face challenges in reacting to the text because of the limited quantity and poor quality of their written responses.

The technology-mediated version of the retelling educational approach known as digital storytelling has been explored more extensively. Digital storytelling implies the practice of creating stories interwoven with digital media, including video recording and alike (Chen, Liu, & Cheng, 2023). Huang (2023) performed a study among Taiwanese EFL students with one group assigned to complete digital storytelling tasks including in-class retelling of digital stories and the other group busy as usual. The results revealed that the storytelling condition significantly increased participants' English-speaking proficiency. A systematic review of 45 publications (Nair & Yunus, 2021) further supports the facilitative role of digital storytelling in improving speaking skills across various student levels. Nonetheless, most studies addressing this method have either been conducted on school-aged subjects (Hwang et al., 2016; Yang, Chen, & Hung, 2022) or compared the efficacy of different modalities of digital storytelling without incorporating untreated control groups (Fu, Yang, & Yeh, 2022; Liang & Hwang, 2023) .

The above considerations underscore a research gap that the current study seeks to address. This study investigates the impact of folklore retelling on the English-speaking performance and vocabulary size of university-level EFL students in Kazakhstan. By focusing on this demographic and employing the traditional retelling method, this research contributes to filling the gap in the literature and provides insights into effective language learning strategies tailored to the needs of tertiary EFL learners.

2.4. Retelling and Hikmets

Hikmets are a collection of sayings and teachings credited to the 12th-century Sufi mystic, poet and philosopher Ahmed Yassawi. The term hikmet originates from the Arabic word "hikmah," which means wisdom. Within Yassawi's teachings, hikmet refers to spiritual wisdom and insight that can be attained through the practice of Sufism. Yassawi's hikmets cover a wide range of topics, including the nature of God and divine love (Suleimenova, Abilkhamitkyzy, Yskak, & Korganbekov, 2022). This study handles these critical areas of language proficiency and thus echoes the global trend of aggrandizing English language proficiency among non-native speakers by evaluating the effects of retelling Yassawi's hikmets on both vocabulary size and speaking performance in EFL students.

There are linguistic theories that could support the suggestion that retelling Yassawi's hikmets could improve the English-speaking performance of L2 university students. We begin with Krashen's input hypothesis, a theory of second language acquisition that posits that language acquisition occurs when learners are exposed to language input that is one step beyond their current level of comprehension which he calls "comprehensible input" (Lichtman & VanPatten, 2021). L2 university students would be exposed to authentic language input which could help improve their understanding and production of English by retelling Yassawi's hikmets. Swain's output hypothesis could also contribute to the suggestion that retelling Yassawi's hikmets could improve L2 university students' English-speaking performance. This theoretical framework for language learning and teaching emphasizes the importance of output production in language acquisition. The hypothesis suggests that when learners produce language, they engage in a cognitive process that facilitates language learning by fostering the noticing of gaps in their linguistic knowledge pushing learners to adjust their output and thus achieve accurate production (Stander & Le Roux, 2022). The hikmet intervention lives up to the tenets of Swain's theory since it assumes producing language output, providing feedback on that output and using authentic and meaningful language in context.

2.5. Research Significance

There may be questions regarding the use of hikmets which lack strong narrative plots when compared to other text forms for oral reproduction given that our study limited the focus of speaking performance to fluency, syntactic and lexical complexity, precision and correctness. The use of hikmets has some advantages. Hikmets are generally short and concise which can allegedly help EFL learners develop fluency in their speaking by encouraging them to speak in a more concise and direct manner. Additionally, hikmets often contain complex language and ideas which could help students develop their syntactic and lexical complexity as they work to convey the meaning of the hikmet somewhat accurately. Finally, given that hikmets are typically written in a poetic form, they may contain a unique and creative use of language that could help students improve their accuracy and overall language proficiency. Thus, we believe that they can still be a valuable tool for improving speaking performance in EFL contexts even though they may not have a clear narrative plot. Yassawi's hikmets are often complex and metaphorical. Working with complex language input can help challenge students' language skills and push them to improve their vocabulary. The results of this study might contribute to the extant literature on language learning and provide insights for teachers seeking to incorporate cultural texts into their language teaching curriculum. Furthermore, this research may shed light on the potential benefits of using literature from different cultures as an instrument to hone language acquisition among students.

2.6. Research Questions

This study sought to address the following research questions:

Does retelling Yassawi's hikmets lead to EFL learners' superior speaking performance (as measured by complexity, accuracy and fluency) and vocabulary size compared with students not involved in extracurricular retelling activities?

Do EFL learners' pre-test vocabulary size and speaking performance have a moderating effect on the effect of the hikmet retelling intervention on their post-test speaking performance and vocabulary size?

3. METHODS

3.1. Research Design

This study adopted an experimental pre- and post-test control group research design. Each intervention group and control group had thirty participants which were distributed at random.

3.2. Research Population

The participants of this study were 60 EFL learners (non-native speakers of English) conventionally sampled from three classes at L.N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University located in Astana, Kazakhstan. The students (78% female) were bachelor's sophomores majoring in English aged between 17 and 20 years (mean = 18.55, standard deviation, SD = 1.20). Their proficiency varied insignificantly with most falling into the B2 level of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) scale, that is upper intermediate proficiency. All participants completed an informed consent form agreeing to be enrolled in the study.

3.3. Intervention

The research project was approved by the university's research ethics board. In the intervention group, an electronic version of English-language Divan-i Hikmet by Hoja Ahmed Yassawi (Yassawi & Trapman, 2018) was distributed to students through email. They were instructed to select and read a hikmet of their choice before each weekly meeting and subsequently deliver a monologue conveying the central message(s) of the selected hikmet at a meeting. The researcher provided corrective and supportive feedback for each speaker. The format used in this study was a 3-hour meeting once a week at the university beyond scheduled classroom time over the course of a

semester. The first meeting was held in mid-September 2022, a few days after the pre-test assessment. Each participant completed a total of ten retellings during the study period. A total of 10 meetings were conducted, the last of which took place in late November followed by post-test examinations for both groups. The control group did not engage in any extra-classroom speaking activities to serve as a valid comparison to the experimental group.

3.4. Procedures

There is consensus in the second language acquisition literature that the three main dimensions shaping L2 performance are fluency, complexity and accuracy (De Jong, 2023; Huang, 2015; Saeedi & Rahimi, 2014; Suzuki & Kormos, 2020). We used oral narrative tasks in pre- and post-tests to gauge the participants' speaking performance. Each participant was requested to narrate in a one-to-one setting by one of the authors who met them individually in a quiet room at their university and provided an explanation regarding the purpose of the task. Three authors were involved in the data collection process. Participants were informed that their narrations would be recorded to carry out repeated analysis of the speech later and were assured that the task was for research purposes rather than being a test. We employed textual prompts as exemplified in the Appendix in contrast to relying solely on pictures or video fragments. However, we supplemented each task with several color pictures depicting corresponding characters or events to minimize any potential confusion resulting from the lack of a visual stimulus in the narrative tasks. These pictures served to provide a clear and concrete visual reference for the students enabling them to more easily understand the narrative and construct their own story or interpretation. The participants were given a time limit of two minutes to look at the prompts and four minutes to perform the task. It was ensured that the learners did not handle the same topic during the pre- and post-tests. Pre- and post-intervention vocabulary assessments were administered in large classrooms using a paper-based test. The test-takers were allotted 40 minutes to complete the form.

3.5. Instruments

Speaking performance. The speech records were transcribed, coded and analyzed using PRAAT software to evaluate five indices representing syntactic and lexical complexity, fluency and accuracy as follows:

Fluency. The articulation rate or how long it takes to produce a syllable on average is believed to be a reliable indicator of L2-specific fluency (Majidi, De Graaff, & Janssen, 2021). In this study, speed fluency was treated as the inverse articulation rate; i.e., the mean duration of syllables (in milliseconds) divided by the total number of syllables spoken not counting pauses.

Syntactic complexity. It was measured by the mean length of clauses and subordination which is the mean number of clauses per analysis of the speech unit.

Lexical complexity. It was quantified based on Daller, Van Hout, and Treffers-Daller (2003) Guiraud advanced index (the number of word types not included in the 2,000 most frequent words list/square root of the number of tokens). The numerator was computed using the online Vocabulary Profiler (lextutor.ca/vp/eng/).

Accuracy. This was treated as the number of lexical and grammatical errors (except minor mispronunciations) per 100 words.

Vocabulary size. The accuracy of lexical representations is thought to be primarily determined by the size of an individual's vocabulary in their second language (Daidone & Darcy, 2021). The present study employed vocabulary size test (Snoder & Laufer, 2022) as documented in their supplementary materials to explore students' knowledge of base words from the first eight 1,000-word frequency bands reflected in a set of 80 multiple-choice items with each item consisting of four possible meanings to choose from. In the cited study, this test was administered to 12th graders but the English course that the participants were enrolled in aligns with CEFR B2 so the test fits our sample. Participants received one point for selecting the correct response and zero points for selecting an incorrect answer. The test was graded on a scale of 0 to 80 with 80 being the highest possible score.

3.6. Validity and Reliability Tests

The task prompts and conditions were piloted previously with comparable students (who were not eventually part of the research population) and proved to be appropriate for our sample. The authors manually pinpointed the units of analysis and errors in the samples. Inter-transcriber reliability was acceptable for each measure (mean Cohen's kappa of greater than .80).

3.7. Statistical Analyses

The data were analyzed statistically using R and MedCalc statistical software version 19.2.6 (MedCalc Software bv, Ostend, Belgium) after calculating the vocabulary size and oral production indices. First, the normality of all variables was confirmed with the D'Agostino-Pearson test. A paired-samples t-test compared pre- and post-test scores within each group followed by an independent-samples t-test for between-group comparisons. ANCOVA was performed after checking statistical assumptions (Khammar, Yarahmadi, & Khanjani, 2020) to control for pre-test scores and vocabulary size and to increase the analytic power of estimating hikmet retelling effectiveness. Significance was declared at p <.05.

4. RESULTS

The unpaired t-test revealed no significant pre-test difference between the groups (p >.05). Intragroup t-tests revealed a significant improvement (p <.01) in clause length for the control group. Significant improvements were found in vocabulary size, lexical complexity (Guiraud Advanced Index) and clause length for the retelling group (see Table 1).

Table 1. Paired t-test for pre- and post-test scores on EFL students' speaking performance and vocabulary size (n = 60).

| Outcome	Intervention			Control		
	Mean diff.	T	Sig.	Mean diff.	t	Sig.
Vocabulary size	6.267	5.966	<0.01	1.867	1.199	0.240
Inverse articulation rate	-7.333	1.421	0.166	4.333	0.698	0.491
Errors per 100 words	-0.567	.676	0.504	-0.333	0.439	0.664
Guiraud advanced index	0.244	3.677	0.001	0.125	1.733	0.094
Mean number of clauses per AS unit	0.056	1.551	0.132	0.044	1.301	0.204
Clause length	0.647	8.182	<0.01	0.623	6.279	<0.01

Note: AS-unit: Analysis of speech unit.
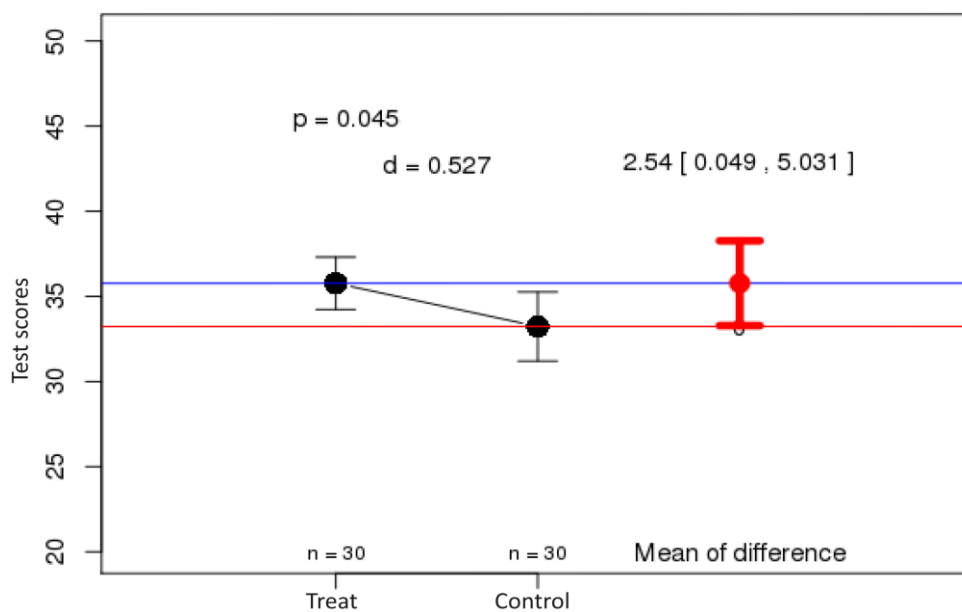
Figure 1. Post-test scores on vocabulary size (t-test). Error bars show 95% confidence intervals.

There was a significant difference between the groups at the post-test in terms of vocabulary size (t = 2.036, p = .046) (see Figure 1), speech fluency, i.e. inverse articulation rate (t = 2.195, p = .032) (see Figure 2) and lexical complexity, i.e. Guiraud Advanced Index (t = 2.535, p = .014) (see Figure 3).

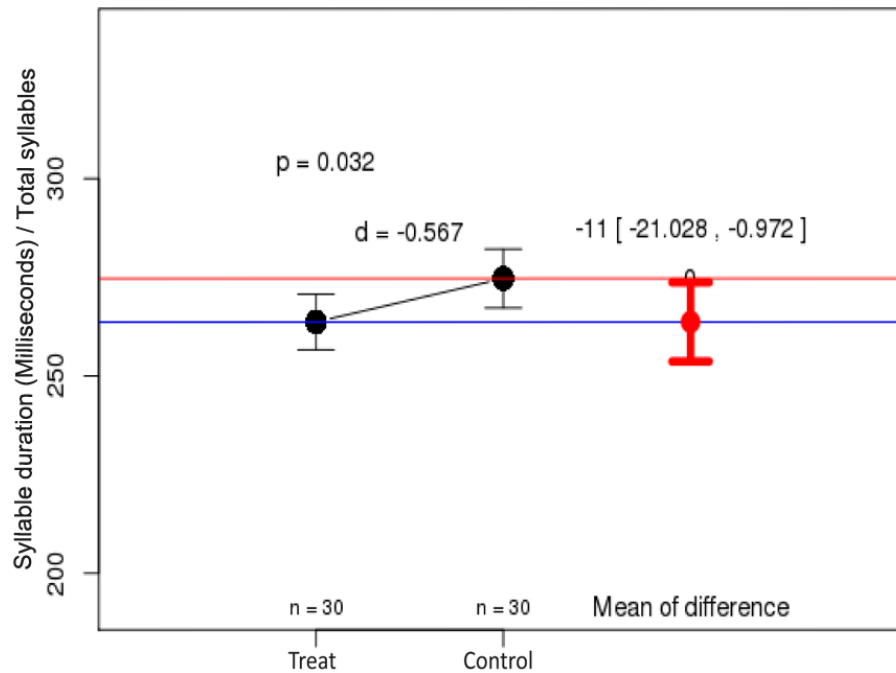**Figure 2.** Post-test scores on speech fluency (t-test). Error bars show 95% confidence intervals.
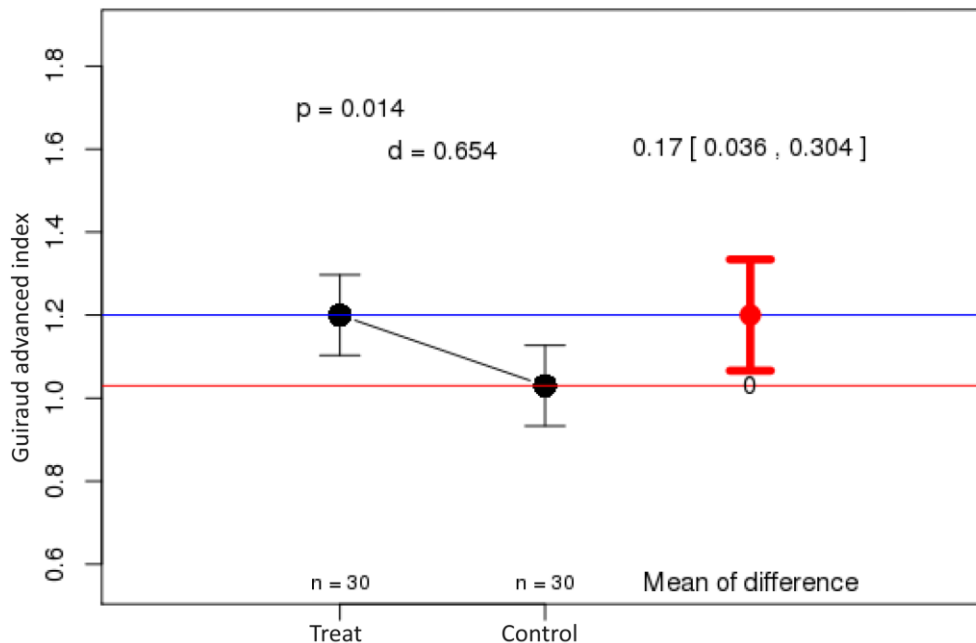

Figure 3. Post-test scores on lexical complexity as Guiraud advanced index (t-test). Error bars show 95% confidence intervals.

There were no statistically detectable between-group differences as per syntactic complexity measured by clause length (t = -1.495, p = .142) (see Figure 4) and subordination (t = .527, p = .583) (see Figure 5) as well as speaking accuracy (t = -0.198, p = .847) (see Figure 6). However, the results of a Bonferroni post hoc test within ANCOVA showed that after controlling for pre-test scores and initial vocabulary size, the retelling group earned significantly higher scores than the non-retelling group only on inverse articulation rate (p <.01) and Guiraud Advanced index (p <.05) (see Table 2). The ANCOVA model indicated that prior vocabulary size and corresponding pre-test level

had a significant moderating influence only on inverse articulation rate $[F (3, 59) = 3.748, p < .01]$ as is evident from Table 2.
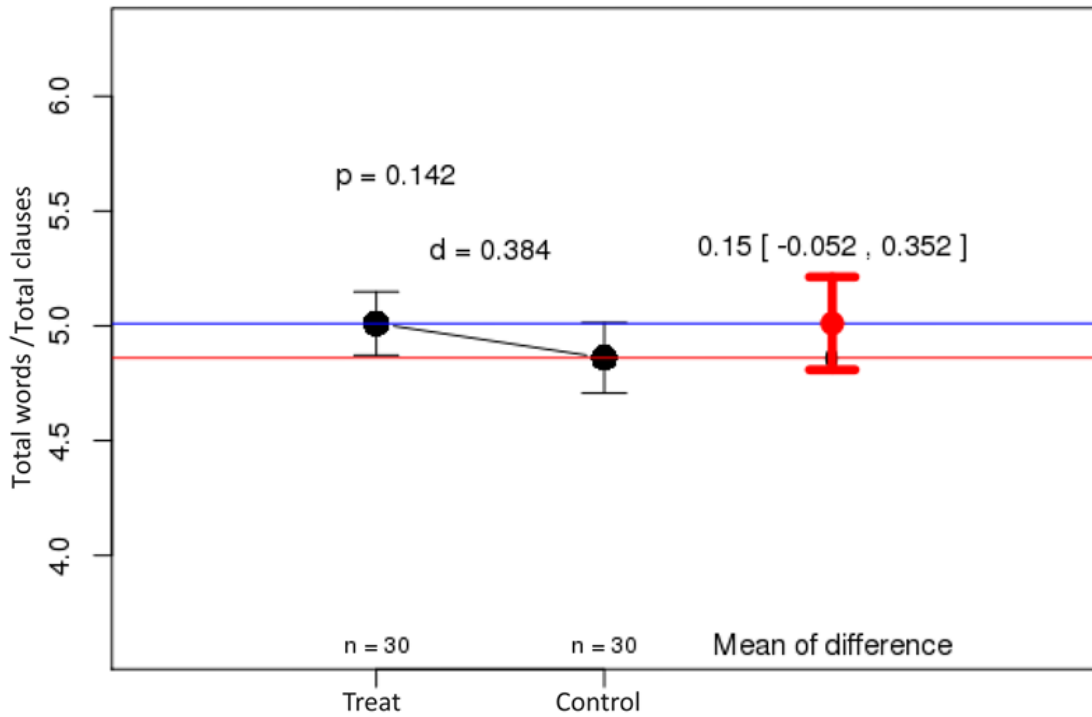

Figure 4. Post-test scores on syntactic complexity as clause length (t-test). Error bars show 95% confidence intervals.
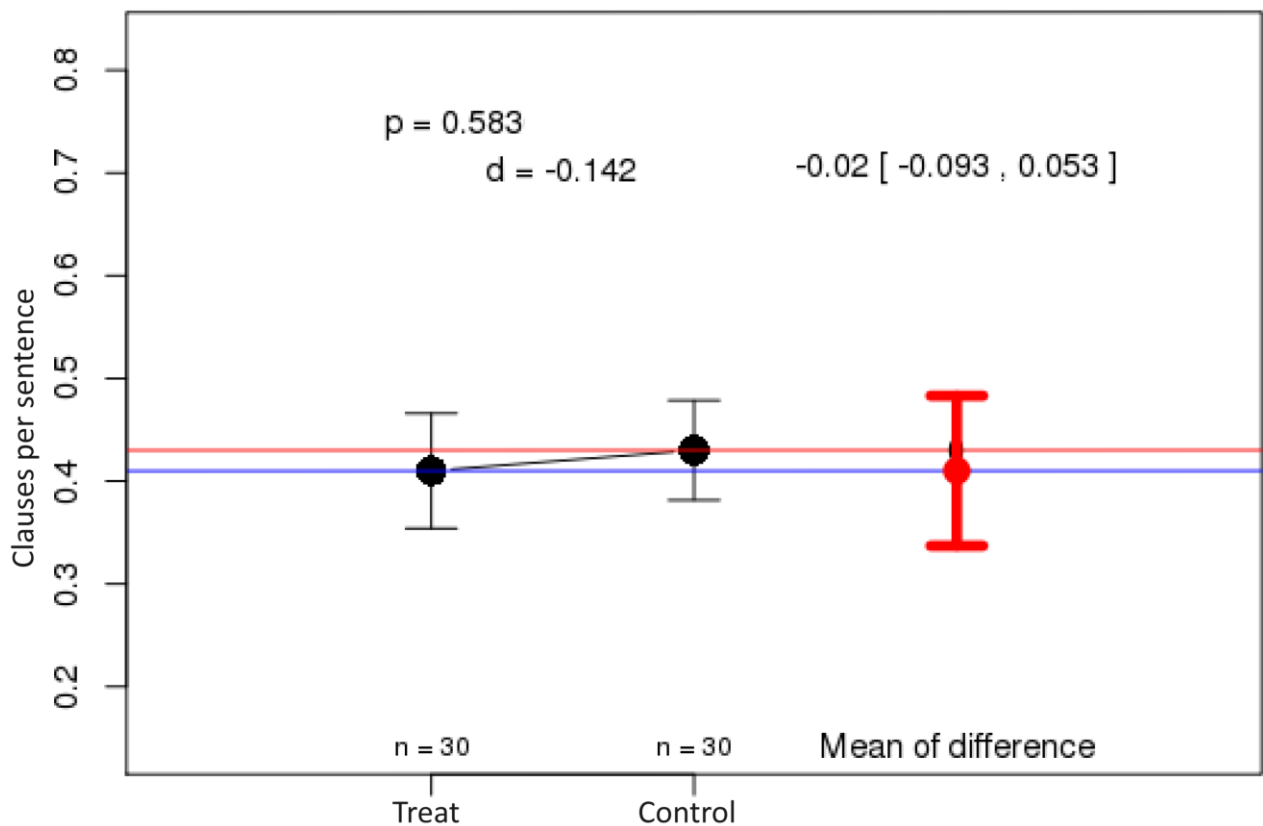

Figure 5. Post-test scores on syntactic complexity as subordination (t-test). Error bars show 95% confidence intervals.
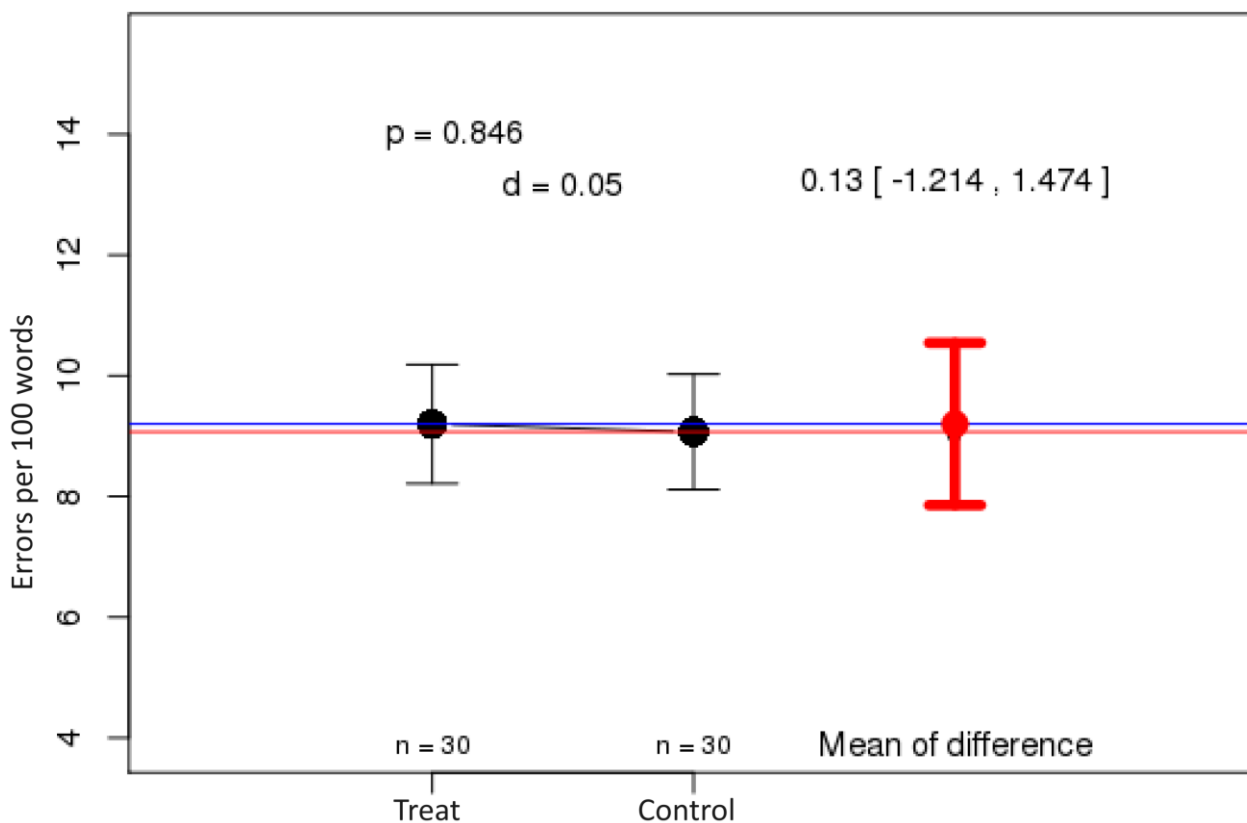
Figure 6. Post-test scores on speaking accuracy as number of errors per 100 words (t-test). Error bars show 95% confidence intervals.

Table 2. Analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) for post-test scores on EFL students' speaking performance and vocabulary size (n = 60). For each outcome variable, the covariates were its pre-test result and pre-test vocabulary size. For the latter, only its pre-test result was controlled.

Outcome	Sum of squares	Mean square	F	Corrected model p	Between-group p[a]
Vocabulary size	106.538	53.269	2.272	0.112	0.067
Inverse articulation rate	3,956.069	1,318.690	3.748	0.016	0.007
Errors per 100 words	40.277	13.426	2.132	0.106	0.791
Guiraud advanced index	0.484	0.161	2.369	0.080	0.018
Mean number of clauses per AS unit	0.0323	0.011	0.527	0.666	0.499
Clause length	0.382	0.127	0.818	0.489	0.202

Note: [a] Bonferroni correction .
AS-unit: Analysis of speech unit.

5. DISCUSSION

According to the research questions posed in the introduction, the investigation results indicated that the retelling group showed a significant increase in vocabulary size, indicators of syntactic and lexical complexity, accuracy and fluency when compared to the non-retelling condition. Furthermore, the study found that pre-test vocabulary size and oral production criteria had a significant moderating effect on the inverse articulation rate which is a measure of speed fluency. This is in line with the study on university EFL students conducted by Miralpeix and Muñoz (2018) who demonstrated that vocabulary size can moderately explain language proficiency, including speaking skills. Another study involved university juniors and seniors with Persian as their first language (Enayat & Derakhshan, 2021) and the work supports the idea that EFL learners' vocabulary mastery was predictive of the fluency facet of their L2 speaking ability. Our findings suggest that adding non-entertaining retelling activities to EFL instruction can have a beneficial impact on learners' speaking performance, particularly in terms of verbal fluency. The effectiveness of retelling activities in terms of speaking skills and vocabulary size in tertiary EFL learners is understudied which hinders comparative analysis with past research. Our scrupulous database search yielded only one pertinent paper (Tachom, 2021) in which having EFL students retell six English-language Thai folktales resulted in their post-test vocabulary knowledge scores significantly exceeding their pre-test level.

This corroborates what the present study discovered. That said, even when the search query was expanded to include out-of-class speaking practice, it did not increase the number of relevant papers. Moreover, the papers that were found often contradicted our evidence. In Sun's (2012) study, Taiwanese EFL students posted voice blogs outside of class to compensate for the lack of speaking practice in their English language course. No notable enhancement was observed in the complexity of speech, fluency, pronunciation or accuracy based on the results. A similar voice blogging intervention that was later carried out in Taiwan (Hsu, 2016) did not reveal significant changes in participants' L2 speaking performance.

The findings described herein align with some educational theories that revolve around the significance of active engagement, cultural context, purposeful social interaction and feedback in learning. For instance, constructivism underscores the active role of learners in constructing their understanding of the world by participating in experiences, reflection and collaboration (Alshammary & Alhalafawy, 2023; Sioukas, 2023). In this study, the retelling activity encouraged learners to immerse themselves in the hikmets' content and reflect on their key messages which likely added to their speaking performance. Furthermore, the feedback offered by the researcher may have enabled learners to identify areas that need improvement and adjust their language use accordingly. Our findings support the use of active engagement and feedback in foreign language learning when viewed from constructivist theory's perspective. Combining situated learning theory with sociocultural theory both seem to have their roots in context. They suggest that learning is a social and cultural process that happens through engagement in cultural activities and social interactions (Bladh, 2022; Marden & Herrington, 2022). The retelling experiment required learners to engage with cultural texts (i.e., hikmets) and participate in cultural practice (i.e., oral storytelling). Learners may have developed a deeper understanding of the cultural context in which hikmets were produced and gained a sense of belonging to the community of hikmet readers and interpreters by engaging in this activity. Therefore, the findings of this study advocate the importance of cultural contexts and social participation in EFL learning contexts.

This study has methodological strengths including an experimental design that minimizes confounding variables by randomly assigning participants to the control or intervention group. Moreover, objective measures were applied to assess the participants' L2 proficiency and reduce potential subjective biases. However, the research has limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings. We focused only on one intervention (retelling Yassawi's hikmets) with a specific group of EFL learners at one university in Kazakhstan. Therefore, further research is needed to explore the potential benefits of retelling activities across different language proficiency levels, age groups, cultural backgrounds, and learning contexts, e.g., classroom versus online learning. Although COVID-19 has spurred research into the influence of online learning conditions on the English-speaking performance of EFL students, the results so far are sparse, mainly qualitative and mixed (Hijazi & AlNatour, 2021; Ravindran, Ridzuan, & Wong, 2022). Furthermore, the intervention lasted ten weeks which may not have been enough to observe its long-term effects. Future studies should consider longer intervention periods to explore the potential of retelling activities for sustained refinements in EFL students' L2 skills.

5.1. Implications

This research provides valuable contributions to the field of EFL education practice and research by presenting empirical evidence that suggests retelling activities can significantly boost learners' speaking skills and vocabulary size even when non-amusing materials are used. These findings offer practical implications for EFL teachers employing extracurricular speaking activities to heighten their students' oral proficiency and vocabulary. Additionally, our results complement existing research by highlighting the moderating effects of learners' current L2 vocabulary size and oral production levels on the effectiveness of retelling courses. This demonstrates the importance of considering learners' language proficiency when designing speaking activities for EFL instruction. This study advances our understanding of effective language teaching and learning strategies and has practical

implications for EFL instructors, curriculum designers and researchers.

5.2. Suggestions

It is supposed that EFL instructors should consider integrating retelling tasks into their curricula or beyond to help bolster students' oral proficiency and vocabulary with respect to recommendations for practice that may be digested from the findings. The fact that the retelling sessions were held outside the class highlights the potential benefits of regular speaking practice outside the classroom. Teachers can encourage their students to participate in regular speaking practices outside of class, such as by joining conversation groups. Previous research has shown that speaking English is often the most stressful of the four language skills for non-English majors and their ability to master this skill is hampered by factors such as insufficient course load (Chang & Lan, 2021). Finally, extracurricular activities can offer diverse opportunities and catalyze peer-to-peer interactions which may lead to amplified socio-emotional wellness and academic achievement for students.

6. CONCLUSION

This paper sheds light on the potential advantages of retelling meetings for EFL learners in elevating their L2 proficiency. According to these findings, retelling hikmets can enhance learners' vocabulary and speaking skills, particularly in terms of verbal fluency. Hence, this practice shows great potential for teaching and learning English as a second language. By using folk materials like Yassawi's "words of wisdom," standard EFL education can offer students more opportunities to speak allowing them to enrich their experiences and communicate effectively with their teachers and peers beyond the classroom. This research adds to the body of literature on EFL teaching and provides supporting evidence for the value of retelling activities. Further research could expand on this investigation by evaluating the effects of retelling exercises in other language-learning contexts over longer period of time.

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APPENDIX

Example of a narrative task

Give a monologue about the character of Black Adam from the Black Adam movie. Discuss why you find this character compelling, what characteristics he possesses that you admire, and what lessons could be learned from his experiences. If you have not watched the Black Adam movie, you may read the short story below for a brief description of the character and his experiences. Alternatively, you may choose to give a monologue about a character from any other film or book that you find compelling and discuss their characteristics and what you have learned from their experiences.

Short story: Black Adam. Black Adam, also known as Teth-Adam, is a complex character who has gone through many transformations throughout his long life. Originally a slave in ancient Egypt, he was chosen by the wizard Shazam to receive the power of the gods, becoming the first champion of the Rock of Eternity. However, he was corrupted by his desire for revenge against those who had wronged him, and was eventually imprisoned for his crimes. Centuries later, Black Adam is freed from his prison by a group of archeologists. He returns to a world that has changed, and struggles to find his place in it. As he seeks revenge against those who have wronged him in the past, he also begins to question his own morality and the consequences of his actions. Black Adam is a character who embodies many conflicting traits - he is powerful yet vulnerable, noble yet vengeful. He is driven by a desire to do what is right, but is often blinded by his own anger and pain. Through his experiences, he learns about the true nature of power and responsibility, and the importance of forgiveness and redemption.