

EFL STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS ON THE USE OF DIGITAL STORYTELLING IN READING: A LITERATURE REVIEW

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ABSTRAK

Artikel ini mengkaji persepsi siswa EFL terhadap penggunaan digital storytelling dalam pembelajaran membaca. Fokus utama artikel ini bukan pada peningkatan skor membaca, melainkan pada bagaimana siswa memahami teks bacaan dan terlibat dalam proses membaca melalui penggunaan media digital storytelling. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan kajian literatur naratif-tematik, artikel ini menelaah sejumlah penelitian jurnal nasional dan internasional yang membahas digital storytelling, pembelajaran membaca, dan pengajaran bahasa Inggris sebagai bahasa asing. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahwa digital storytelling dipersepsikan secara positif oleh siswa karena mampu meningkatkan minat membaca, membantu pemahaman teks, serta membuat kegiatan membaca menjadi lebih menarik dan bermakna. Integrasi elemen multimedia seperti gambar, audio, dan video membantu siswa membangun pemahaman isi bacaan secara lebih kontekstual. Selain itu, penggunaan digital storytelling juga menciptakan suasana pembelajaran yang lebih interaktif dibandingkan metode konvensional. Secara keseluruhan, temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa digital storytelling dapat berfungsi sebagai media pendukung yang efektif dalam pembelajaran membaca EFL. Artikel ini menekankan pentingnya pemanfaatan digital storytelling tidak hanya sebagai alat bantu visual, tetapi sebagai bagian dari proses pembelajaran membaca yang mendorong keterlibatan aktif siswa.

Kata kunci: digital storytelling, EFL, keterampilan membaca, persepsi siswa

ABSTRACT

This article examines EFL students' perceptions of the use of digital storytelling in reading instruction. The main focus of this study is not on reading score improvement, but on how students understand reading texts and engage in the reading process through digital storytelling. Using a narrative-thematic literature review approach, this article reviews several national and international journal studies related to digital storytelling, reading instruction, and English as a Foreign Language learning. The findings indicate that digital storytelling is positively perceived by students as it increases reading interest, supports text comprehension, and makes reading activities more engaging and meaningful. The integration of multimedia elements such as images, audio, and video helps students construct a more contextual understanding of reading texts. In addition, the use of digital storytelling creates a more interactive learning environment compared to conventional reading instruction. Overall, the findings suggest that digital storytelling functions as an effective supporting medium in EFL reading instruction. This article highlights the importance of considering digital storytelling not merely as a visual aid, but as an integral part of the reading learning process that encourages active student engagement.

Keyword: digital storytelling, EFL, reading skill, students' perceptions

INTRODUCTION

Reading holds a central role in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning as it serves as a primary source of language input for learners. Through reading activities, students are exposed to vocabulary, grammatical patterns, and various types of texts commonly used in academic contexts (Grabe & Stoller, 2020). In EFL environments

where opportunities to use English in daily communication are limited, reading becomes a crucial skill that supports overall language development and comprehension (Ateek, 2021).

Despite its importance, many EFL students still experience difficulties in reading English texts. Common problems include limited vocabulary

knowledge, low interest in reading, and instructional practices that rely heavily on textbooks and teacher-centered activities (Lustyantie & Aprilia, 2020; Nussy & Pekpekay, 2024). These conditions often result in low student engagement and negative perceptions toward reading activities in the classroom.

Along with the advancement of educational technology, digital media have increasingly been integrated into EFL classrooms to support students' learning processes. One of the approaches that has attracted attention is digital storytelling, which presents stories through a combination of narrative elements and multimedia resources such as images, audio, and video (Puspitasari et al., 2025). Through multimodal presentation, digital storytelling has the potential to support students' text comprehension by integrating visual and auditory elements, which students perceive as helpful in understanding learning materials (Djamdjuri et al., 2021; Hidayat et al., 2024).

A growing body of research in EFL contexts suggests that digital storytelling is perceived positively when applied in reading instruction. Research indicates that students generally perceive digital storytelling as an engaging medium that increases their interest in reading and helps them comprehend texts more easily (Radaideh et al., 2020; Sartika & Syafryadin, 2025). Similarly, Umam et al. (2025) found that digital storytelling enhances students' engagement in reading activities and is preferred over conventional reading instruction. These studies suggest that digital storytelling has the potential to support reading instruction in EFL contexts.

However, although a growing number of studies have examined the use of digital storytelling in language learning, most of them focus on learning outcomes or instructional effectiveness. Studies that specifically explore students' perceptions of using digital storytelling in reading activities remain limited, particularly in secondary school contexts (Ahada et al., 2024). As a result, there is still a lack of synthesized understanding of how students experience digital storytelling as part of the reading process.

Therefore, further research is needed to synthesize existing findings and provide a clearer picture of students' perceptions of digital storytelling in EFL

reading instruction. Based on this, this article reviews previous studies on the use of digital storytelling in EFL reading. The focus of this review is not on measuring reading achievement, but on exploring how students perceive digital storytelling as a medium for reading activities. By synthesizing findings from relevant studies, this article aims to present an overview of how digital storytelling is perceived by EFL students and how it is used to support reading in classroom contexts.

In addition, recent literature reviews have highlighted that thematic analysis enables researchers to identify key themes and methodological patterns within educational research, particularly in studies related to digital and multimodal learning environments (Djamdjuri et al., 2023).

METHOD

This study employed a narrative-thematic literature review to explore the use of digital storytelling in EFL reading instruction and students' perceptions of its implementation. This approach enabled the synthesis of findings from previous studies to identify patterns related to student engagement, reading comprehension, and the role of multimedia in reading activities.

The literature reviewed in this study was selected based on its relevance to digital storytelling in language learning and reading instruction in EFL contexts. The review focused on recent journal articles to ensure the relevance of the findings. Both empirical and theoretical studies discussing the application of digital storytelling and multimodal learning in EFL reading classrooms were included, while studies focusing solely on quantitative test results without addressing students' learning experiences were excluded.

Each selected article was examined to identify how digital storytelling was implemented in reading instruction and how it was perceived by students. The findings were then organized into thematic categories, including student engagement in reading activities, support for text comprehension, and the role of multimedia elements in facilitating understanding. These themes were synthesized narratively to provide an integrated overview of the use of digital storytelling in EFL reading classrooms.

In total, this literature review analyzed 12 journal articles published between 2020 and 2025.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Based on the analysis of previous studies, this literature review identifies several key ideas that explain how digital storytelling can be used to address common problems in EFL reading instruction. One of the main issues highlighted in the literature is students' low engagement and limited interest in reading English texts when learning relies solely on conventional, text-based instruction. Digital storytelling is often discussed in the literature as an alternative approach that provides interactive and visually supported reading experiences for EFL students.

The reviewed studies suggest that digital storytelling can transform reading activities into more engaging learning experiences. By integrating written text with images, audio, and video, digital storytelling provides multimodal support that students perceive as helpful in understanding learning materials. This multimodal presentation allows learners to follow the storyline more easily and makes reading English texts feel less challenging (Djamdjuri et al., 2021). As a result, digital storytelling is viewed as a practical approach to support reading comprehension in EFL classrooms.

Another important idea emerging from the literature is the role of digital storytelling in creating a more positive learning atmosphere for reading activities. Several studies report that students tend to show more interest and willingness to participate when digital storytelling is used as part of reading instruction (Sartika & Syafryadin, 2025; Umam et al., 2025). This indicates that digital storytelling can function as a medium that encourages active involvement and reduces students' negative perceptions of reading English texts. Rather than focusing solely on reading outcomes, the literature emphasizes how digital storytelling changes the way reading activities are experienced by students.

In terms of classroom practice, the literature suggests that digital storytelling is most effective when used as a complementary tool to support reading instruction. Teachers often employ digital stories to introduce reading topics, provide

contextual support, or facilitate discussion before and after reading activities. This approach allows students to engage with texts more meaningfully and supports the reading process through guided interaction. However, the literature also highlights that the effectiveness of digital storytelling depends on appropriate instructional design and alignment with learning objectives.

From a broader perspective, the findings of this literature review offer insights into how digital storytelling can contribute to the development of EFL reading instruction in the digital era. Digital storytelling is not presented merely as a technological tool, but as an instructional approach that supports student engagement and comprehension through multimodal learning. By synthesizing previous research, this article provides an overview of how digital storytelling can be used as a solution to common challenges in EFL reading classrooms and offers a conceptual basis for future instructional practices and research.

CONCLUSION

This literature review concludes that digital storytelling can be considered a relevant and promising approach to support EFL reading instruction. Based on the synthesis of previous studies, digital storytelling is viewed as a solution to common problems in reading activities, particularly low student engagement and difficulties in understanding English texts. By combining written texts with visual and audio elements, digital storytelling helps make reading activities more meaningful and accessible for EFL students. The reviewed literature also indicates that students generally perceive digital storytelling positively, as it creates a more engaging reading environment and supports their understanding of texts. These findings suggest that digital storytelling has the potential to enhance the quality of reading instruction when it is integrated appropriately into classroom practice. In terms of implications, teachers are encouraged to use digital storytelling as a complementary medium to support reading activities and increase student engagement. For future research, further studies are recommended to explore the use of digital storytelling in different educational levels, text types, and classroom contexts, as well as to investigate students' experiences more deeply through empirical classroom-based research.

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