


# The Influence of Digital Storytelling on EFL Students' Reading Motivation and Reading Habits

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\*Yesi Darmayanti, Vivi Amanda, Rani Zahra, Asih Ria Ningsih, Khabib Muafi, Andini Safitri<sup>abcdef</sup>

<sup>123456</sup>Universitas Rokania, Indonesia

Corresponding Author : [Yesi.darmayanti89@gmail.com](mailto:Yesi.darmayanti89@gmail.com)

## A B S T R A C T

This research examined the effect of digital storytelling on EFL students' reading motivation and reading habits at SMK Inayah Ujung Batu. A quantitative approach with a quasi-experimental design was applied, involving an experimental group and a control group. The participants consisted of 40 second-grade students, divided equally into two classes: 20 students in the experimental class and 20 students in the control class. The experimental group received instruction through digital storytelling, whereas the control group was taught using conventional reading methods. Data were collected using Likert-scale questionnaires measuring reading motivation and reading habits. The data analysis employed descriptive statistics, paired sample t-tests, and independent sample t-tests using SPSS. The results demonstrated a substantial improvement in the experimental group. The mean score of reading motivation increased from 59.45 (pre-test) to 85.15 (post-test), while reading habits improved from 56.45 to 83.15. In comparison, the control group showed relatively lower gains. Statistical testing confirmed that the significance value was below 0.05 (Sig. = 0.000 < 0.05), indicating a statistically significant effect. These findings suggest that digital storytelling effectively enhances students' motivation and fosters better reading habits. The integration of multimedia elements contributes to increased engagement, active participation, and positive attitudes toward reading. Therefore, digital storytelling can be considered an innovative and effective instructional medium for improving students' reading-related outcomes in English language learning.

**Keywords:** *Digital Storytelling, Reading Motivation, Reading Habits, Reading Instruction*

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## INTRODUCTION

Reading is a fundamental skill in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning because it enables students to acquire information, expand vocabulary, and develop overall language competence. More importantly, reading motivation and reading habits play a crucial role in determining students' success in language learning. Students who demonstrate high motivation and consistent reading habits tend to achieve better comprehension, show stronger engagement, and attain higher academic performance (Bakkaloglu, 2023; Le et al., 2019; Sun & Wang, 2021). In addition, recent studies emphasize that motivation serves as a driving force that influences students' willingness to interact with texts, while reading habits reflect the sustainability of such engagement over time (Li & Chen, 2022; Rahimi & Fathi, 2023).

However, in many EFL classrooms, students still experience low reading motivation and poor reading habits. Reading is often perceived as a difficult, monotonous, and less engaging activity, leading students to avoid reading tasks and spend minimal time interacting with English texts independently. This issue has been widely reported in recent literature, where traditional text-based instruction fails to capture students' interest and does not sufficiently support active learning (Huang, 2020; Nguyen & Habók, 2022). Consequently, these conditions negatively affect students' reading engagement and overall learning outcomes.

In the digital era, students are increasingly attracted to interactive and multimedia-based content rather than conventional printed texts. Therefore, integrating technology into reading instruction has become essential to address these challenges. One innovative instructional medium is digital storytelling, which combines text, images, audio, animation, and other multimedia elements to create meaningful and interactive learning experiences. According to recent studies, digital storytelling promotes multimodal learning, enhances student engagement, and supports deeper comprehension by presenting information through multiple sensory channels (Hava, 2021; Robin, 2020; Yang & Wu, 2021). Furthermore, it has been shown to foster positive attitudes toward reading and increase students' motivation to participate actively in learning activities (Tamimi, 2024; Yulianawati et al., 2022; Smeda et al., 2019).

Although a growing body of research has examined the benefits of digital storytelling in EFL contexts, most studies have primarily focused on reading comprehension, vocabulary acquisition, or general learning motivation. Limited attention has been given to its simultaneous impact on both reading motivation and reading habits. Recent studies highlight the need to explore how digital tools not only enhance immediate engagement but also contribute to long-term reading behaviors (Li & Chen, 2022; Rahimi & Fathi, 2023). This indicates a research gap that warrants further investigation.

Based on these considerations, this study aims to examine the influence of digital storytelling on students' reading motivation and reading habits in EFL classrooms. A quantitative approach with a quasi-experimental design is employed, involving EFL students. Data is collected through questionnaires measuring reading motivation and reading habits, supported by pre-test and post-test procedures to identify changes before and after the implementation of digital storytelling. Statistical analyses are conducted to determine the significance of the observed effects.

The results indicate that digital storytelling exerts a positive and significant influence on students' reading motivation and reading habits. Students demonstrate increased interest, active participation, and stronger engagement in reading activities, along with more consistent reading practices compared to their initial condition. These findings suggest that integrating digital storytelling into reading instruction can transform students' reading experiences into more engaging, interactive, and meaningful learning activities.

In conclusion, this study contributes both theoretically and practically to EFL learning. Theoretically, it enriches the understanding of technology-integrated language learning, particularly regarding the role of digital storytelling in enhancing motivation and reading habits. Practically, it offers English teachers an innovative instructional strategy to improve students' reading engagement, foster positive reading behaviors, and support better learning outcomes in the digital era.

## METHOD

This study employed a quantitative research approach using a quasi-experimental design to examine the influence of digital storytelling on students' reading motivation and reading habits in EFL classrooms. The research involved two groups: an experimental group and a control group. The experimental group received reading instruction through digital storytelling, whereas the control group was taught using conventional reading instruction.

The study was conducted at SMK Inayah Ujung Batu. The population of this study consisted of EFL students at the secondary school level. The sample was selected using a purposive sampling technique, considering the similarity of students' English proficiency and classroom characteristics. The total number of participants was 60 students divided into two classes, with 30 students in the experimental class and 30 students in the control class. The experimental class was treated using digital storytelling during the teaching and learning process, while the control class learned through traditional reading methods without multimedia integration.

The instrument used in this study was a questionnaire consisting of two sections: reading motivation and reading habits. The questionnaire employed a five-point Likert scale, where 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree, and 5 = strongly agree. Higher scores indicated higher levels of reading motivation and more positive reading habits. The reading motivation section measured students' interest, confidence, enjoyment, and willingness to engage in reading activities. Meanwhile, the reading habits section measured reading frequency, reading duration, and independent reading practices. Before administration, the instruments were tested for validity and reliability through expert judgment and statistical analysis to ensure accuracy and consistency.

The research procedures were conducted in several stages. First, both groups were administered a pre-test questionnaire to assess their initial levels of reading motivation and reading habits. Second, the experimental group received treatment through digital storytelling for several instructional meetings, during which students were exposed to multimedia-based stories incorporating images, audio narration, animations, and interactive texts. Meanwhile, the control group continued learning through conventional reading instruction. Finally, both groups were given a post-test questionnaire to measure any changes after the treatment.

The data obtained from the questionnaires were analyzed quantitatively using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The analysis was conducted through several systematic steps. First, data coding and scoring were performed by assigning numerical values (1-5) to each response based on the Likert scale. Second, descriptive statistics were calculated to determine the mean scores and standard deviations of both groups in the pre-test and post-test. Third, a normality test and homogeneity test were conducted to ensure that the data met the assumptions required for parametric testing. Fourth, a paired sample t-test was used to examine the differences between pre-test and post-test scores within each group. Fifth, an independent sample t-test was applied to compare the post-test results between the experimental and control groups. The level of significance used in this study was 0.05. If the significance value (Sig.) was lower than 0.05, the alternative hypothesis ( $H_a$ ) was accepted, indicating that digital storytelling had a significant influence on students' reading motivation and reading habits in EFL classrooms.

## FINDING AND DISCUSSION

### Findings

The findings of this study revealed that students who were taught using digital storytelling experienced significant improvement in their reading motivation. Based on the pre-test results, the experimental class had a mean score of 59.45, indicating that students initially showed moderate to low motivation in reading English texts. Many students reported that they rarely read English materials voluntarily because they considered reading difficult and less interesting. After the implementation of digital storytelling, the post-test mean score increased significantly to 85.15. This improvement indicates that students have become more enthusiastic and confident in participating in reading activities. In contrast, the control class only improved from 59.45 to 67.00, showing a smaller increase compared to the experimental class. The findings suggest that digital storytelling provided a more engaging learning atmosphere that encouraged students to become more active readers.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Reading Motivation Scores

Group	Test	N	Mean	SD
Experimental Class	Pre-test	30	59.45	6.21
	Post-test	30	85.15	5.34
Control Class	Pre-test	30	59.45	6.10
	Post-test	30	67.00	5.89

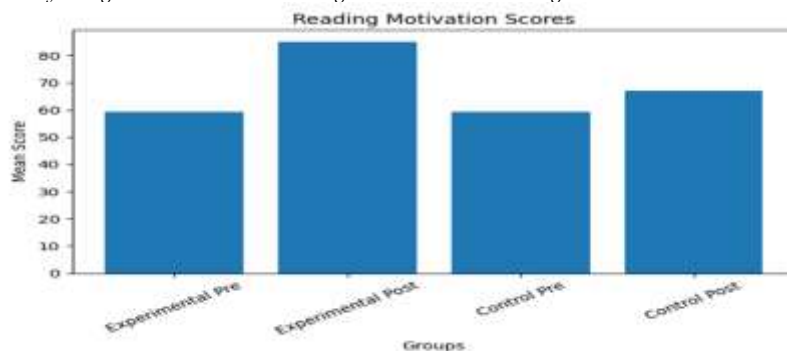


Diagram 1. Reading Motivation Mean Scores

The statistical analysis showed that the significance value was lower than 0.05 (Sig. = 0.000 < 0.05), indicating that digital storytelling significantly influenced students' reading motivation in EFL classrooms. This result demonstrates that the use of multimedia-based storytelling successfully increased students' interest, confidence, and enjoyment in reading English texts. Students appeared more motivated to participate in reading activities because digital storytelling presented reading materials in more attractive and interactive forms.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of Reading Habits Scores

Group	Test	N	Mean	SD
Experimental Class	Pre-test	30	56.45	6.45
	Post-test	30	83.15	5.67
Control Class	Pre-test	30	56.20	6.30
	Post-test	30	65.80	5.95

The statistical analysis revealed that the significance value was lower than 0.05 (Sig. = 0.000 < 0.05), showing that digital storytelling significantly improved students' reading habits.

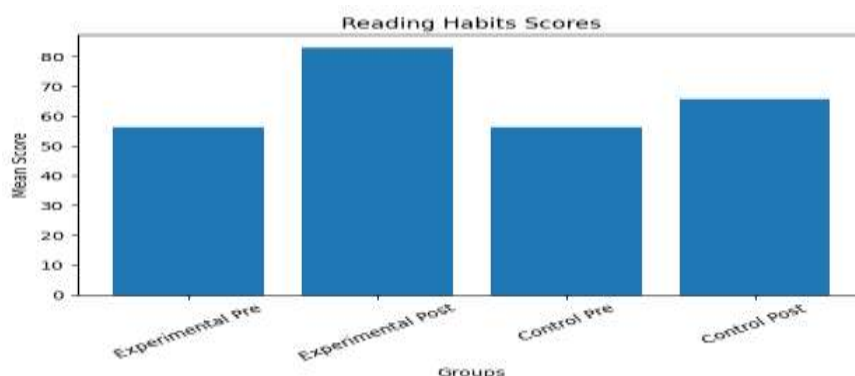


Diagram 2. Reading Habits Mean Scores

The statistical analysis revealed that the significance value was lower than 0.05 (Sig. = 0.000 < 0.05), showing that digital storytelling significantly improved students' reading habits. Students in the experimental class showed increased reading frequency, longer reading duration, and greater willingness to access English reading materials outside the classroom. These improvements indicate that digital storytelling successfully encouraged students to build more positive and sustainable reading behaviors.

## Discussion

The significant improvement in students' reading motivation in the experimental class can be explained by the characteristics of digital storytelling itself. Digital storytelling integrates multimedia elements such as images, audio, animation, and narration, which make learning more interactive and meaningful. These elements help students understand the content more easily and reduce the difficulty often associated with reading English texts. As a result, students feel more confident and motivated to engage in reading activities.

From a theoretical perspective, this finding is supported by Multimedia Learning Theory, which states that students learn better when information is presented through both visual and auditory channels rather than text alone. The combination of images and narration in digital storytelling helps students process information more effectively, thereby increasing comprehension and motivation. In addition, Constructivist Learning Theory also supports this result, as digital storytelling encourages students to actively construct meaning from the stories through interaction, prediction, and reflection. Furthermore, the increase in motivation can also be explained through Self-Determination Theory, which emphasizes the importance of intrinsic motivation in learning. Digital storytelling creates a more enjoyable and less stressful learning environment, allowing students to feel a sense of autonomy and engagement. When students enjoy the learning process, they are more likely to develop a positive attitude toward reading.

These findings are consistent with previous studies. For example, Temel and Yılmaz (2025) found that digital storytelling significantly improved EFL learners' motivation by making learning more engaging and interactive. Similarly, Karaarslan and Polat (2025) reported that digital reading environments enhanced students' motivation and attitudes toward reading. Other studies have also shown that the use of multimedia in language learning can increase students' interest, participation, and overall learning outcomes. In contrast, the control class showed only a slight improvement because conventional teaching methods tend to rely heavily on text-based instruction, which may not fully engage students. Without the support of multimedia elements, students may continue to perceive reading as a difficult and monotonous activity. In summary, the findings indicate that digital storytelling is an effective instructional medium for improving students' reading motivation. Its ability to combine visual, auditory, and interactive elements makes reading more accessible, enjoyable, and meaningful for EFL students.

## CONCLUSION

This study concludes that digital storytelling has a significant positive effect on students' reading motivation and reading habits in EFL classrooms at SMK Inayah Ujung Batu. Students in the experimental group demonstrated substantially greater improvement in reading motivation than those in the control group, indicating the effectiveness of digital storytelling as an instructional approach. The integration of multimedia elements, including images, audio, animation, and interactive content, created a more engaging learning environment that increased students' interest, confidence, participation, and enthusiasm for reading activities. In addition, digital storytelling encouraged the development of positive reading habits by increasing reading frequency, reading duration, and students' willingness to read English materials independently beyond classroom requirements. Statistical analysis confirmed the significance of these improvements, supporting the effectiveness of digital storytelling in enhancing reading-related outcomes. Therefore, teachers are encouraged to integrate digital storytelling into reading instruction to promote student-centered learning and engagement. Future research should explore its impact on other language skills and across broader educational contexts.

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