

## **Improving Students Reading Skill Through Digital Storytelling Method At Tenth Grade of SMA Negeri 8 Padangsidempuan**

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### **Abstrak**

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk meningkatkan kemampuan membaca siswa melalui penerapan metode Digital Storytelling (DST) di kelas 10 SMA Negeri 8 Padangsidempuan. Latar belakang penelitian ini adalah rendahnya pemahaman membaca siswa, penguasaan kosakata yang terbatas, dan keterlibatan minimal selama pelajaran membaca bahasa Inggris. Penelitian ini menggunakan Penelitian Tindakan Kelas (CAR) yang terdiri dari dua siklus: perencanaan, tindakan, observasi, dan refleksi. Partisipan penelitian adalah 35 siswa kelas 10 yang dipilih menggunakan metode pengambilan sampel total. Data dikumpulkan melalui tes pemahaman membaca, lembar observasi, dan dokumentasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan peningkatan yang signifikan pada kemampuan membaca siswa. Nilai rata-rata meningkat dari 57,34 pada pre-test menjadi 65,75 pada Siklus I dan mencapai 80,69 pada Siklus II. Persentase siswa yang mencapai penguasaan pembelajaran meningkat dari 40% menjadi 68,57% dan akhirnya 88,57%. Studi ini menyimpulkan bahwa Digital Storytelling merupakan metode pembelajaran yang efektif untuk meningkatkan kemampuan membaca siswa dan keterlibatan di kelas.

**Kata Kunci:** *bercerita digital, keterampilan membaca, penelitian tindakan kelas, bahasa inggris sebagai bahasa asing*

### **Abstract**

*This study aimed to improve students' reading skills through the implementation of the Digital Storytelling (DST) method at the tenth grade of SMA Negeri 8 Padangsidempuan. The background of this research was students' low reading comprehension, limited vocabulary mastery, and minimal engagement during English reading lessons. The research employed Classroom Action Research (CAR) consisting of two cycles: planning, action, observation, and reflection. The participants were 35 tenth-grade students selected using total sampling. Data were collected through reading comprehension tests, observation sheets, and documentation. The findings revealed a significant improvement in students' reading skills. The mean score increased from 57.34 in the pre-test to 65.75 in Cycle I and reached 80.69 in Cycle II. The percentage of students achieving mastery learning improved from 40% to 68.57% and finally 88.57%. The study concludes that Digital Storytelling is an effective instructional method to enhance students' reading skills and classroom engagement.*

**Keywords:** *digital storytelling, reading skill, classroom action research, English as foreign language*

## 1. Pendahuluan

Reading is one of the most essential language skills in learning English as a foreign language (EFL). Through reading activities, students can develop vocabulary, improve grammatical understanding, and enhance overall language proficiency. Reading also plays a vital role in academic achievement because it allows students to access information, understand written instructions, and engage with various forms of texts.

Despite its importance, many students at the senior high school level still face difficulties in reading English texts. Preliminary observations conducted at SMA Negeri 8 Padangsidempuan revealed that tenth-grade students showed low reading comprehension, difficulty identifying main ideas, limited vocabulary mastery, and low motivation during reading lessons. These problems were further aggravated by teaching methods that relied heavily on textbooks and teacher explanations, which resulted in passive classroom participation.

To address these challenges, teachers are encouraged to apply innovative and technology-based instructional strategies. One such approach is Digital Storytelling. Digital Storytelling integrates storytelling with multimedia elements such as images, audio narration, and video, creating an interactive and meaningful learning environment. Therefore, this study focuses on investigating the effectiveness of Digital Storytelling in improving students' reading skills.

## 2. Literature Review

Reading is a complex cognitive process that involves decoding written symbols, understanding vocabulary, and

constructing meaning from text. According to Grabe, effective reading comprehension requires interaction between textual information and the reader's background knowledge. In EFL contexts, reading becomes even more challenging because students must process unfamiliar vocabulary and grammatical structures simultaneously.

Digital Storytelling is defined as an instructional approach that combines narrative with digital media to enhance learning experiences. Robin explains that Digital Storytelling supports the development of critical thinking, creativity, digital literacy, and learner engagement. By integrating visual and auditory elements, Digital Storytelling helps students understand story content more easily and retain information longer.

Previous studies have reported positive effects of Digital Storytelling on reading comprehension and student motivation. Multimedia-based stories enable students to visualize content, interpret meaning, and connect ideas within texts. These findings support the theoretical foundation of using Digital Storytelling as an effective method in reading instruction.

## 3. Research Methodology

This study employed Classroom Action Research (CAR) as the research design. CAR was chosen because it allows teachers to improve instructional practices through a reflective and cyclical process. The research was conducted at SMA Negeri 8 Padangsidempuan during the 2024/2025 academic year.

The participants consisted of 35 students from class X<sup>2</sup>. The sampling

technique used was total sampling because the population size was less than 100. The research instruments included reading comprehension tests (pre-test and post-tests), observation sheets to measure student engagement, and documentation to support qualitative data.

The research was conducted in two cycles. Each cycle consisted of four stages: planning, action, observation, and reflection. The criterion of success was achieved if at least 85% of students reached the minimum mastery score of 70.

#### **4. Result and Discussion**

The results of the pre-test showed that students' reading skills were relatively low, with a mean score of 57.34. Only 40% of the students achieved the minimum mastery criteria, indicating the need for instructional improvement.

After the implementation of Digital Storytelling in Cycle I, students' reading performance improved. The mean score increased to 65.75, and 68.57% of students achieved mastery learning. Although improvement was evident, the result had not yet met the criterion of classical mastery.

In Cycle II, further improvement was observed. The mean score increased significantly to 80.69, and 88.57% of students achieved mastery learning. These results indicate that Digital Storytelling effectively improved students' reading skills across cycles.

The improvement in students' reading performance suggests that Digital Storytelling provides meaningful and engaging learning experiences. The integration of images, audio, and narration helped students visualize story content, understand vocabulary in context, and identify main ideas more effectively.

Students also became more active during learning activities, showing increased motivation and participation in

discussions. These findings are consistent with previous studies that emphasize the effectiveness of Digital Storytelling in enhancing reading comprehension and learner engagement in EFL classrooms.

#### **5. Kesimpulan**

Based on the findings of this classroom action research, it can be concluded that the implementation of the Digital Storytelling (DST) method significantly improved students' reading skills at the tenth grade of SMA Negeri 8 Padangsidempuan. The improvement was evident not only in students' reading comprehension scores but also in their learning engagement and participation during English reading lessons. The gradual increase in mean scores from the pre-test to Cycle I and Cycle II demonstrates that Digital Storytelling effectively supports students in understanding texts, identifying main ideas, and comprehending vocabulary within meaningful contexts.

Furthermore, the use of Digital Storytelling created a more interactive and enjoyable learning environment. The integration of visual and audio elements helped students become more focused and motivated, reducing their anxiety toward reading English texts. Students showed greater confidence in responding to reading tasks and actively participated in classroom discussions. This indicates that Digital Storytelling does not only improve cognitive aspects of reading but also positively influences students' affective learning domain.

In addition, the Classroom Action Research approach allowed continuous reflection and improvement of teaching practices. Through the cyclical process of planning, action, observation, and reflection, the teacher was able to identify learning obstacles and adjust instructional strategies accordingly. This process contributed to the successful

implementation of Digital Storytelling and maximized its impact on students' reading achievement.

In conclusion, Digital Storytelling is an effective and recommended instructional method for teaching reading in EFL classrooms, particularly at the senior high school level. Teachers are encouraged to integrate Digital Storytelling into reading instruction as an alternative to traditional teaching methods. Future researchers are also advised to explore the application of Digital Storytelling in other language skills or educational levels to further examine its effectiveness in different learning contexts.

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