THE EFFECT OF USING DIGITAL CHILDREN'S LITERATURE ON *PRATHAMBOOKS.ORG* TO EFL COLLEGE STUDENTS' VOCABULARIES AND READING ANXIETY AT UNP

THESIS

Submitted as Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements to Obtain Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) in English Language Education

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ABSTRACT

Yuliani. (2023). The Effect of Using Digital Children's Literature on *Prathambooks.org* to EFL College Students' Vocabularies and Reading Anxiety at UNP. Thesis. Padang: English Language and Literature Department. Faculty of Languages and Arts. Universitas Negeri Padang.

Digital children's literature provides authentic and interesting reading media for EFL students. This research aims to investigate whether using digital children's literature in the form of picture books on *prathambooks.org* has a significant effect on EFL college students' vocabularies and reading anxiety. This study applied a quasi-experimental research design with a quantitative method. The population was the English language education major students who enrolled in Introduction to Literature subject for the 2022/2023 academic year. The sample was two classes consisting of 64 students from K6 and K7 which were selected using cluster random sampling. The data for vocabulary tests were gathered using a pre-test and a post-test of EFL college students' vocabularies consisting of 150 vocabularies taken from 15 selected stories on *prathambooks.org*. Then, the data for reading anxiety were collected using pre-response and post-response to reading anxiety questionnaires adopted from Ahmad et al., (2013). A collection of 15 stories completed with vocabulary exercises and vocabulary lists was used as the reading daily treatment within 15 days. The data from the descriptive statistics test and paired sample test showed that students in the experimental class who followed the reading treatment with a guided learning approach increased their familiarity with vocabulary given statistically significant by about 4.78% from 497.44 or 66.32% to 533.25 or 71.1% and decreased their reading anxiety statistically significant by approximately 4.04% from 91.66 or 70.51% to 6.41 or 66.47%. On the contrary, the students in the control class who applied autonomous use of technology and did not receive any treatments or structured exercises increased their familiarity statistically insignificant by approximately 1.65% from 528.06 or 70.40% to 540.38 or 72.05% and increased their reading anxiety statistically insignificant by about 3.75% from 82.47 or 63.43% to 87.34 or 67.18% during that time. This research proves that employing digital children's literature in the form of picture books on *prathambooks.org* with structured exercises has a significant effect on improving EFL college students' vocabularies and decreasing their reading anxiety.

Keywords: Digital Children's Literature, *Prathambooks.org,* EFL College Students, Vocabularies, Reading Anxiety

ABSTRAK

Yuliani. (2023). The Effect of Using Digital Children's Literature on *Prathambooks.org* to EFL College Students' Vocabularies and Reading Anxiety at UNP. Thesis. Padang: Departemen Bahasa dan Sastra Inggris. Fakultas Bahasa dan Seni. Universitas Negeri Padang.

Sastra anak digital menyediakan media bacaan yang otentik dan menarik bagi siswa EFL. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menyelidiki apakah penggunaan sastra anak digital dalam bentuk buku bergambar pada prathambooks.org memiliki dampak significant terhadap kosakata dan kecemasan membaca mahasiswa EFL. Penelitian ini menggunakan desain penelitian kuasi eksperimen dengan metode kuantitatif. Populasi penelitian ini adalah mahasiswa jurusan pendidikan bahasa Inggris yang mengambil mata kuliah Introduction to Literature pada tahun ajaran 2022/2023. Sampel penelitian ini adalah dua kelas yang terdiri dari 64 mahasiswa dari K6 dan K7 yang dipilih menggunakan cluster random sampling. Data untuk tes kosakata dikumpulkan dengan menggunakan pre-test dan post-test kosakata mahasiswa EFL yang terdiri dari 150 kosakata yang diambil dari 15 cerita pilihan di prathambooks.org. Kemudian, data untuk kecemasan membaca dikumpulkan dengan menggunakan kuesioner pra-respon dan pasca-respon terhadap kecemasan membaca yang diadopsi dari Ahmad dkk., (2013). Kumpulan 15 cerita yang dilengkapi dengan latihan kosakata dan daftar kosakata digunakan sebagai perlakuan membaca setiap hari selama 15 hari. Data dari uji statistik deskriptif menunjukkan bahwa siswa yang mengikuti perlakuan membaca dengan *guided learning* mengalami peningkatan pengetahuan terhadap kosakata yang diberikan signifikan secara statistik sekitar 4,78% dari 497,44 atau 66,32% menjadi 533,25 atau 71,1% dan mengurangi kecemasan membaca mereka signifikan secara statistik sekitar 4,04% dari 91,66 atau 70,51% menjadi 6,41 atau 66,47%. Sebaliknya, kelas kontrol yang belajar secara autonomous tidak menerima perlakuan atau pun spesifik latihan-latihan mengalami peningkatan pengetahuan kosakata tidak signifikan secara statistik sekitar 1,65% dari 528,06 atau 70,40% menjadi 540,38 atau 72,05% dan terjadi peningkatan kecemasan membaca tidak signifikan secara statistik sekitar 3,75% dari 82,47 atau 63,43% menjadi 87,34 atau 67,18% dalam kurun waktu tersebut. Penelitian ini membuktikan bahwa penggunaan literatur anak digital dalam bentuk buku bergambar di prathambooks.org dengan latihan terstruktur memiliki pengaruh yang signifikan dalam meningkatkan kosakata mahasiswa EFL dan mengurangi kecemasan membaca mereka.

Kata kunci: Digital Children's Literature, *Prathambooks.org,* EFL College Students, Vocabularies, Reading Anxiety

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Problem

English has become world language that is widely learned by countries around the world whether as the second language or as a foreign language. In Indonesia, the English language is categorized as a foreign language which means that English is taught as a subject in schools. Learning the English language means learning how to communicate fluently in both oral and written forms. Hence, to be categorized as proficient users, EFL learners must have the ability to use the English language for various communicative purposes. However, the English Proficiency Index (EPI) released by EF English First (an education institution with international standards) shows that Indonesia ranked 81st out of 111 countries in the world, and 15th out of 24 countries in Asia. Indonesia falls under the 'low proficiency band' category (EF English Proficiency Index: EF EPI, 2023).

There are four language skills that must be mustered by EFL learners to improve their English proficiency, which are listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Listening and reading are the receptive skills or the input of the language while speaking and writing are the productive skills or the output of the language. However, the language component that every language learner must master at first is vocabulary. Richards & Renandya (2002, p. 255) stated that a primary component of language proficiency is vocabulary, an essential component of how proficient learners talk, listen, read, and write. Without a broad vocabulary and techniques for increasing it, learners cannot maximize their potential and discourage taking the

opportunities to learn a language and use language in different contexts, such as from reading or watching TV.

Words are the heart of a language, “We listen to words, we speak words, we read words, and we write words” (Kurniawan, 2016, p. 89). Hence, learning vocabulary becomes important for EFL learners. According to McCarthy & O’Dell (1999, p. 2) vocabulary learning means learning the meaning of a word, the other words it usually goes with, and how it is pronounced. The foundations of vocabulary skills are a clear understanding of a language and the appropriate uses of the vocabulary in each circumstance. EFL learners can learn new English vocabulary through reading and listening to English. The researcher, in this study, focused on improving vocabulary through reading activities because the relationship between reading and vocabulary in foreign language learning is known as a bidirectional relationship. It means that learners with high vocabulary mastery will be easier to read and will have big opportunities to learn new vocabulary from the reading activities (Clenton & Booth, 2021, p. 67). Moreover, Nation (2006, p. 79) states that to deal with written text without difficulty, people need an 8,000–9,000 word-family vocabulary and a 6,000-7,000 word-family vocabulary to deal with spoken text. In short, vocabulary is crucial for developing reading skills and vice versa.

Moreover, reading plays a crucial role as a receptive skill in receiving information from written materials. Reading cannot be separated from the term reading comprehension since a reader must relate the new information with their prior knowledge to get an understanding, and this is the purpose of reading. The nature of reading is “We learn to read, and we learn through reading” (Smith, 2004,

p. 13). Furthermore, to achieve language proficiency, reading skills should integrate with other skills. However, many studies have found that reading English texts could be challenging for EFL learners since a large number of students, especially adult learners, tend to read slowly, have limited vocabulary knowledge, and primarily focus on specialized textbooks to pass a test. They are not used to expose with interesting learning materials, therefore they believe that reading English texts is tiresome and unpleasant task that must be completed (Lee, 2015, p. 66).

Then, the challenges or difficulties experienced by EFL learners when comprehending English text put them in uneasy conditions, such as anxious feelings and fear, known as anxiety. Ahmad, Al-Shboul, Nordin, Rahman, Burhan & Madarsha (2013) reveal individual factors and text features as two primary aspects that contribute to foreign language reading anxiety. The personal factors have two primary sources; being afraid of making errors and worrying about reading effects, while text features have three primary sources; unknown vocabulary, unfamiliar topics, and unfamiliar culture. Following this research, a study on EFL college students' reading anxiety conducted by Fadhilah & Marlina (2022) found that EFL college students at the English Department FBS UNP indicate a high level of reading anxiety. They revealed primary factors contributing to anxiety in reading English texts are unknown vocabulary and unfamiliar topics under the language features and fear of making errors under the personal factor aspect.

Furthermore, Kamil & Fitrawati (2023) also investigated the EFL learners' level of reading anxiety at the UNP's English Department and found that most students (67%) had medium anxiety, 20% of students experienced high-level anxiety, and only 13% of students experienced low-level anxiety. Then, the

researchers found that unknown vocabulary is the main factor of reading anxiety faced by the students. The second factor is the worry of reading effect, followed by unfamiliar topics, fear of making errors, and unfamiliar culture.

Considering the significant factors causing anxiety when reading a foreign language, teachers should examine the criteria for choosing reading texts related to content suitability, exploitability, and readability offered by Nuttal (1996, as cited in Brown & Lee, 2015, p. 411). The teachers must choose suitable reading material that makes students not feel anxious, stressed, or bored while reading the text. In other words, the material should make students enjoy it. As reading is the input of language, the written materials should help students meet specific linguistics and content goals, can be used for teaching tasks and strategies, and can be integrated with other skills. Moreover, the text should be challenging for students to read, but the vocabulary and structure are not too difficult. Thus, in selecting reading media, teachers must consider English texts that can gain students' interest and improve their vocabulary.

One of the media to gain EFL learners' interest in reading English text as well as to improve their vocabulary is digital children's literature in the form of picture books. Children's literature is considered the original art that is worth reading by children and adults. Hunt (2005, p. 10) states that children's books can answer both questions "Why are we reading? What are books for?". Children's books offer more advantages than most books can do at different times and for various reasons. For instance, while teaching reading methods or skills, besides concentrating on the cognitive aspects of reading, the teachers can also use children's literature as media to impart vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension (Barone, 2011, pp. 3–4). In the

EFL classroom, children's books are authentic materials for learning literacy, learning vocabulary, and decreasing reading anxiety.

Picture books are books used as reading media for children and even adults. Picture books or picture story books convey stories and moral lessons through well-written and vivid illustrations. Commonly, the vocabularies used in the stories are simple and easy to understand by looking at the illustrations. Moreover, as a reading medium, children's literature picture books can help learners naturally learn vocabulary as they focus on the stories and illustrations rather than learning a language (Nurgiyantoro, 2010, p. 158). Furthermore, as we live in the digital age, children's literature can be accessed from various websites, such as *Pratham Books* (*prathambooks*.org), *storynory.com, storybookscanada.ca,* and *Storyline Online.*

Related to this research, there are some previous studies on the utilization of children's literature, short stories, and digital stories in improving students' vocabulary and reducing their reading anxiety. The first was a study by Marlina (2013), she suggested that English children's literature can be used to teach EFL in Indonesia through the Literature Circle technique. The second was research by Abdul-ameer (2014) that investigated how Iraqi young learners at the primary level can improve their vocabulary through digital stories. The third study was conducted by Nasria, Ihsan & Dakhalan (2022) to find the effect of using short stories as learning materials on improving high school students' vocabulary mastery at SMA Negeri 6 Palu. The fourth study, by Asnita & Marlina (2022), discovered that English children's literature or short stories can help EFL college students become more proficient with vocabulary and experience less anxiety when reading. The fifth was research conducted by Haviza & Marlina (2022) examined how anecdote

stories could improve the vocabulary of EFL college students and lessen their reading anxiety when reading English texts. The last study, Ahwida & Marlina (2023) examined the impact of integrating *storynory.com,* a digital children's literature website, on students' listening anxiety at UNP's English Department.

The previous research above mentioned the impact of integrating children's literature, short stories, or digital stories in improving students' vocabularies and decreasing students' reading and listening anxiety. However, the researcher found that there are still limited studies on the utilization of digital children's literature, especially picture books on EFL college students' vocabularies and their reading anxiety. Therefore, in this study, the researcher analyzed "The Effect of Using Digital Children's Literature on *Prathambooks.org* to EFL College Students' Vocabularies and Reading Anxiety at UNP". The researcher used picture book stories on the *prathambooks.org* website since there is still limited study of the use of stories from a specific children's literature website.

B. Identification of the Problem

Some issues can be investigated based on the information in the research background:

1. The level of EFL college students' vocabulary knowledge at the English Department UNP
2. The level of EFL college students' reading anxiety at the English Department UNP
3. The effect of using digital children's literature on *Prathambooks.org* to EFL college students' vocabularies at the English Department UNP

4. The effect of using digital children's literature on *Prathambooks.org* to EFL college students' reading anxiety at the English Department UNP

C. Limitation of the Problem

This study focused on investigating the effect of using digital children's literature in the form of picture books on *Prathambooks.org* to EFL college students' vocabularies and reading anxiety at the English Department UNP.

D. Formulation of the Problem

Many EFL learners in the English Department UNP might have experienced difficulties in improving their vocabulary, and this issue is in line with their reading anxiety. In fact, vocabulary learning cannot be separated from reading activities. Thus, the researcher formulates the problem as "Does the use of digital children's literature on *Prathambooks.org* affect EFL college students' vocabularies and reading anxiety at the English Department UNP?"

E. Research Questions

Regarding the issues above, here are some questions proposed for this research:

1. Is there any significant effect on EFL college students' vocabulary after using digital children's literature on *Prathambooks.org*?
2. Is there any significant effect on EFL college students' reading anxiety after using digital children's literature on *Prathambooks.org*?

F. Purpose of the Research

The purpose of this research is to find out whether there is any significant effect of using digital children's literature on *Prathambooks.org* to EFL college students' vocabularies and reading anxiety at the English Department UNP.

G. Significance of the Research

The researcher hopes the result of this research would be beneficial for:

1. Theoretically

   The finding of this research can be useful for the academic environment and EFL learners since it explains the impact of using digital children's literature on *prathambooks.org* to EFL college students' vocabulary and reading anxiety.

2. Practically

   a. For Lecturers

      The results of this study hopefully can be a consideration in selecting interactive reading media for improving students' vocabulary as well as reducing their reading anxiety.

   b. For Researchers

      The finding of this research may serve as a reference and guideline for further research related to integrating digital children's literature in language learning.

   c. For EFL College Students

      The results of this study hopefully help EFL college students in finding interactive learning media to improve vocabulary and reduce reading anxiety.

H. Definition of the Key Terms

There are the definitions of the key terms used in this study:

1. Children's Literature

   In this study, children's literature is stories that are created for children in the form of picture books, which both children and adults can use for various purposes.

2. Digital Children's Literature

   In this study, digital children's literature refers to digital stories that can be accessed on websites.

3. Prathambooks.org

   In this study, *Prathambooks.org* is a website that provides children's literature in the form of picture books in multilingual languages to support pleasure reading for everyone.

4. Vocabulary

   Vocabulary is a fundamental element of a language that a language learner must learn at first. A set of words used for communication (reading, listening, writing, and speaking).

5. Reading Anxiety

   Reading anxiety is an unpleasant feeling that a reader experiences while reading English text.