
Digital Storytime: Investigating Prathambooks.org's Role in Reducing College Reading Anxiety

Leni Marlina¹

Dian Safitri²

Zul Amri²

Fauzul Aufa³

Yuliani²

¹ Corresponding author, Universitas Negeri Padang, Indonesia; lenimarlina@fbs.unp.ac.id

² Universitas Negeri Padang, Indonesia

³ Monash University, Australia

Received: 25 November 2024

Accepted: 20 January 2025

Published: 1 February 2025

Abstract

EFL learners consider reading English texts as a tiresome and unpleasant task that must be completed since they are not used to being exposed to interesting reading materials (Lee, 2015, p. 66). Digital children's literature allows EFL learners to experience reading books interactively. This research aims to investigate whether using digital children's literature *prathambooks.org* has a significant effect on EFL college students' reading anxiety. *prathambooks.org* is a web-based story book that provides an open-access repository through the *prathambooks.org* feature. This study examined 184 undergraduate students enrolled in Introduction to Literature at Universitas Negeri Padang's English Department during the 2022/2023 academic year. Data were collected via a 26-item reading anxiety questionnaire adapted from Ahmad et al. (2013), administered pre- and post-intervention. The intervention consisted of a 15-day program utilizing 15 digital stories from *Prathambooks.org*, supplemented with comprehension and vocabulary exercises. This protocol was designed to investigate the effects of digital children's literature on college-level reading anxiety. The finding showed a positive effect on students' reading anxiety after following reading treatment. The students' post-response scores decreased significantly by about 4.04%, from 70.51% to 66.47%. This research proves that integrating *prathambooks.org* with structured exercises as reading material has a significant effect on decreasing EFL college students' reading anxiety.

Keywords: Digital children's literature, Prathambooks.org, Reading, Reading anxiety, EFL students



To cite this article: Marlina, L., Safitri, D., Amri, Z., Aufa, F., & Yuliani. Digital Storytime: Investigating Prathambooks.org's Role in Reducing College Reading Anxiety. *SALEE: Study of Applied Linguistics and English Education*, 6(1), 288-304. <https://doi.org/10.35961/salee.v6i1.1709>

DOI: 10.35961/salee.v6i1.1709

1. Introduction

One of the basic skills that English language learners acquire is reading. Reading involves a cognitive process of deriving the meaning of a text by decoding the symbols of a language. According to experts, reading involves a complex interaction between prior knowledge, language proficiency, cognitive abilities, and text features. Reading comprehension means the ability to recognize and pronounce words in line with the ability to understand and make meaning from the text. Reading in the psycholinguistic study is considered the process of “making sense” which means the ability to interpret and recognize a situation using our knowledge, not only interpreting a piece of written text (Smith, 2004, p. 2). 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 being exposed to interesting reading materials; therefore, they believe that reading English texts is a tiresome and unpleasant task that must be completed (Lee, 2015, p. 66).

EFL learners usually face anxiety when they must read an English text and it negatively affects their language proficiency. In this study, the researchers focused on investigating reading anxiety as a crucial issue that can bother the learning process and act as a significant predictor of success in reading the target language (Gonen, 2007, p. 1036). Moreover, Jalongo & Hirsh (2010, pp. 433–434) studied the relation between negative emotional responses and reading anxiety. They consult psychologists' definitions of anxiety to discover how anxiety and reading progress are related. Then, they defined reading anxiety as a negative emotion such as fear, anxiety, and phobia that impacts reading performance because anxiety produces physical and cognitive reactions.

Digital children's picture books offer a compelling medium to engage EFL learners in English texts while enhancing their vocabulary. This form of literature, valuable for both children and adults, serves as an effective tool for language acquisition and reading motivation in EFL contexts. 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 engaging illustrations. Commonly, the vocabularies used in the stories are simple and easy to understand by looking at the illustrations. As a reading medium, illustrated children's literature facilitates incidental vocabulary acquisition, as learners engage with stories and visuals rather than focusing explicitly on language learning. (Nurgiyantoro, 2010, p. 158). In the digital era, children's literature is readily accessible through various online platforms, including Prathambooks.org, Storynory.com, Storybookscanada.ca, and Storyline Online.

Furthermore, related to the use of digital children's literature as a stimulating reading material for decreasing reading anxiety, Pulimeno et al. (2020, pp. 15–20) state that children's literature is a valuable tool for educating, teaching, and healing because it provides

the opportunity to deal with inner conflicts and life's challenges, to engage in motivating lessons, and to learn specific language skills. Moreover, integrating digital children's literature in EFL adult classrooms enabled adults to learn significantly because it offers learning through experiences. Children's literature with its diverse life themes is suitable learning material for EFL adults since to develop critical and spiritual development, relevant educational experiences are required (English, 2000, pp. 13–18). As a result, as they engage in their reading material, unconsciously their anxiety will decrease.

Overcoming EFL college students' reading anxiety through reading picture books on *prathambooks.org* completed with some structured exercises in guided learning class was the focus of this study. According to Brown & Lee (2015, p. 75), it is common and natural for language learners to be somewhat reliant on their teachers in the early going. However, through guided practice, strategy training, and permitting some creative innovation within constrained forms, teachers can aid even novices in developing a sense of autonomy learning. Moreover, in this research, the researchers chose 15 stories on *prathambooks.org* that include unfamiliar vocabulary, topics, and culture for Indonesian students. The reason for selecting these stories was to expose students to the English language in written form without burdening them with reading effects. The study explored whether digital children's picture books could mitigate reading anxiety among English department students at UNP.

1.1. Theoretical framework

1.1.1. Reading anxiety

Ahmad et al. (2013, pp. 107–108) investigated the potential sources contributing to EFL reading anxiety in Jordan. They revealed text features and personal factors as two primary sources of their reading anxiety. Related to text features, unknown vocabulary, unfamiliar topics, and unfamiliar culture were the potential sources. Then, related to EFL personal factors lie afraid of making errors and worry about reading effects. Following this research, Muhlis (2017, p. 31) studied the factors contributing to EFL students' reading anxiety using the same instrument. Then, he ranked the reading anxiety factors from the most frequent to the least frequent factors. He ranked the sources related to text features as follows: (1) unknown vocabulary, (2) unfamiliar topic, (3) unfamiliar culture; and related to personal factors as follows: (1) afraid of making errors, (2) worry about the reading effect.

Following this research, a study on EFL college students' reading anxiety conducted by Fadhilah & Marlina (2022, p. 213) 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. Moreover, Kamil & Fitrawati (2023, p. 310) 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 noted unknown vocabulary as 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.

1.1.2. Digital children's literature picture books as reading media

Children's picture storybooks or picture books are written for children by gathering pictures and texts to tell a story with an appropriate theme for children (Malu, 2013, p. 11). Picture books can provide opportunities for vocabulary building, grammar and pronunciation practice, reading comprehension, and cultural learning. Moreover, in selecting high-quality children's picture books, the researchers followed the instructions provided by Malu (2013, p. 13), as follow (1) books that receive national or international recognition, (2) books that do not promote racism or sexism, and (3) books from independent booksellers who specialize in children's books. Therefore, this research integrated picture books on *prathambooks.org*, an independent book publisher, as an authentic and valuable reading material.

There are some previous studies about the utilization of children's literature as reading material. The first study was conducted by Marlina (2013). She suggests that English teachers integrate appropriate children's literature into classroom activities using the literature cycle technique. Children's literature is an authentic and valuable reading source because it offers inspiring stories, cultural and linguistic enrichment, as well as personal engagement Hismanoglu (2005, as cited in Marlina, 2013). The second research by Asnita & Marlina (2022) investigated the effectiveness of using Morris's (1965) children's book "Life with the Lucketts" in expanding students' vocabulary and lessening their reading anxiety at the English Department of FBS UNP. The finding shows a significant effect on students' vocabularies and reading anxiety after using children's literature as a learning medium.

Additionally, Haviza & Marlina (2022, p. 245) also revealed the effectiveness of anecdote stories in enhancing vocabulary and decreasing reading anxiety of EFL college students at the English Department UNP. Furthermore, concerning digital media, Abdul-ameer (2014, p. 208), found that the utilization of the Internet and computer-based technology has positive impacts on foreign language learning. The last study was conducted by Ahwida & Marlina (2023). They discovered a significant effect on EFL college students' listening anxiety as a result of integrating digital children's literature on *storynory.com* at the English Department UNP.

This study integrated the Pratham Books or *prathambooks.org*, a web-based storybook that provides original version of literary work as a reading source. As a nonprofit publisher that introduce children to the joy of reading, *prathambooks.org* has been publishing captivating storybooks in a variety of languages and formats to encourage children around the world to discover the joy of reading.

Prathambooks.org, which collaborates with publishers like Indonesia's "Badan Pengembangan dan Pembinaan Bahasa," offers free multilingual children's picture books through its "StoryWeaver" platform. This digital repository provides filterable content and features like read-along and translation tools. It offers diverse themes suitable for EFL learners, including adventure, humor, culture, and science (StoryWeaver: Prathambooks, 2023).

2. Method

This study utilized a quasi-experimental design with quantitative methods. This approach, similar to experimental designs but lacking random assignment, was chosen due to practical

or ethical constraints in participant allocation while still aiming to examine intervention effects (Creswell, 2012, p. 297). This study's population consisted of 184 second-semester English Education students who took the Introduction to Literature course at the English Department, Faculty of Languages and Arts, Universitas Negeri Padang during the 2022/2023 academic year. Two classes (K6 and K7), each with 32 students, were selected through cluster random sampling. Using a non-equivalent control-group design, K6 served as the control class and K7 as the experimental class. Both classes underwent pre- and post-tests, with only the experimental class receiving the intervention (Isnawan, 2020, pp. 11–12).

The level of reading anxiety among EFL college students was assessed with a pre- and post-response Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Scale (FLRAS) Questionnaire adapted from Ahmad et al. (2013). The questionnaire was sent using Google Forms and consisted of 26 statements using the Likert Scale. Students responded to each sentence with one of five options: (1) Strongly Disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Neither Disagree nor Agree, (4) Agree, and (5) Strongly Agree. As a result, the test scores range from 26 to 130, which are then converted into percentages to assess the degree of reading anxiety.

The experimental class received reading daily treatment with reading exercises after filling out the pre-response to the reading anxiety questionnaire. Data analysis employed SPSS Version 25, using descriptive statistics and paired sample t-tests. The study tested two hypotheses: the null hypothesis posited no significant effect of *Prathambooks.org*'s digital children's literature on EFL college students' reading anxiety, while the alternative hypothesis proposed a significant effect.

In administering the treatment, the researcher collaborated with the Introduction to Literature lecturer. The intervention consisted of a 15-day program using 15 stories from *Prathambooks.org*, complemented by structured reading comprehension and vocabulary exercises. In each day's reading treatment, students were exposed to a new story containing new vocabulary, new topics and new culture. G-Forms daily treatment was provided by the researcher and distributed to the experimental class by the lecturer through WhatsApp group. Then, the participants did the reading daily activities including reading one picture book and completing WH and Vocabulary Questions in the Google Forms within 15 – 30 minutes. Daily treatments concluded with 10 vocabulary items, including English definitions and Indonesian translations. The control group engaged in autonomous learning without guidance on using the website. They did not receive any treatment or structured exercises related to integrating picture books on *prathambooks.org* during this time. However, they were introduced to the *prathambooks.org* website when they took the Introduction to Literature subject. The following table provides the titles, topics, and links of each daily treatment.

Table 1. The title and topic of 15 selected stories as reading daily treatment

No	The Title	Topics/ Categories	Link of the Treatment
1	Kali Wants to Dance	Biographies	https://bit.ly/Reading_Day1
2	A Stitch in Time	Family & Friends	https://bit.ly/Reading_Day2
3	The Case of the Missing Water	Adventure & Mystery	https://bit.ly/Reading_Day3
4	Sudipta Sengupta – The Rock Reader	Biographies	https://bit.ly/Reading_Day4

No	The Title	Topics/ Categories	Link of the Treatment
5	Raza Meets the King	History	https://bit.ly/Reading_Day5
6	Under the Invisibility Cloak	Science & Nature	https://bit.ly/Reading_Day6
7	I want to Ride a Motorbike	Family & Friends	https://bit.ly/Reading_Day7
8	Wildlife in a City Pond	Science & Nature	https://bit.ly/ReadingDay8
9	Creatures of Old	History	https://bit.ly/Reading_Day9
10	The Birthday Cake	Family & Friends	https://bit.ly/Reading_Day10
11	Our Beautiful World	Science & Nature	https://bit.ly/Reading_Day11
12	Manikantan Has Enough	Science & Nature	https://bit.ly/Reading_Day12
13	Marching to Freedom	History	https://bit.ly/Reading_Day13
14	How Pintu Found Pi	Family & Friends	https://bit.ly/Reading_Day14
15	The Cat in the Ghat!	Science & Nature	https://bit.ly/Reading_Day15

(Source: The researchers' documentary in administering the treatment)

Table 2. List of target vocabularies of each story (10 vocabularies/story)

Story Number	List of Target Vocabularies of Each Story (10 vocabularies / story)
1	villains, pretends, astonished, spare, crookedly, afterwards, folk, sternly, adjust, lean
2	seams, needle, crumpled, screwdriver, heat, scold, sneak out, wire, puncture, immerses
3	vessels, trunks, reeds, stomped, gnawed, snapped, panting, pored, pump, bund
4	boulders, secluded, scaled, remotest, rucksack, bog, incline, crevice, jut, patterns
5	royal, fussy, finest, cooed, chamber, exquisite, mole, embroidery, frowning, bated
6	disappear, cushion, cloak, trace, muffler, brigade, bit, pile, bends, mischief
7	shortcut, muttered, pores, overhears, immediately, irritating, considerate, matters, bent, unaware
8	cacophony, barren, blades, splash, scurried, binoculars, deliberate, damselflies, appeal, bustling
9	nostrils, rumbled, ferocious, ancient, rotted, autorickshaws, stout, spine, intact, unhatched
10	creaky, shouting, shutting, gobble, pool, grumbled, wobbly, squinting, admonished, neglected
11	wonders, fellow, epoch, flourished, thrived, prosperous, ancestors, replenish, vanish, prosperity
12	amulet, trudged, plenty, gusts, droplets, hints, brewed, snapped, shuddered, tucked
13	glumly, eagerly, frowned, marches, brooded, hut, stubbornly, cowshed, adamant, stroked
14	encountered, muster, leafed, spotted, path, circumference, spokes, endless, buzzing, approximate

Story Number	List of Target Vocabularies of Each Story (10 vocabularies / story)
15	handy, encounter, clues, roared, swarm, glee, hive, grasslands, somersault, startled

(Source: The researchers' documentary in selecting 10 vocabularies of each story)

Here are the indicators of reading anxiety questionnaire based on Ahmad et.al. (2013).

Table 3. The indicator of reading anxiety in the questionnaire

Number of Statement	Domain	Aspects
1 – 6	Unknown Vocabulary	Text Features
7 – 10	Unfamiliar Topic	
11 – 15	Unfamiliar Culture	
16 – 20	Afraid of Making Errors	Personal Factors
21 – 26	Worry about Reading Effects	

(Source: The indicator of reading anxiety according to Ahmad et.al., 2013)

Table 4. FLRAQ adopted from Ahmad et.al., 2013

No.	Statements
1	When I am reading in English, I get very upset and worried whenever I encounter unfamiliar vocabulary.
2	I focus on words when reading English texts because if I know the terms, I can understand the text.
3	I feel anxious when reading English when I encounter a series of three unfamiliar words.
4	I enjoy reading a text in English only when I know its translation.
5	I do not like to read an English text that has lots of difficult words.
6	When I am reading in English, I feel upset and anxious if I encounter words the meaning I do not know.
7	I enjoy reading English only when I understand at least some portion of the text.
8	I do not prefer reading unfamiliar topics, particularly in the English language.
9	The most things I like to read in English are short stories because they have easy words, and their topics are common.
10	I feel anxious when I am reading a topic in the English language which I have no idea about.
11	In reading English, I hardly understand the idea if there is more than one meaning for each word.
12	When I read English, I often understand the words, but I still cannot quite understand what the writer says.
13	I usually translate word by word when I am reading English.
14	It is frustrating when reading English when one word is connected with another to change the meaning.
15	I most often feel that I cannot understand an English text even though I know every word's meaning.
16	I feel anxious reading aloud in fear of making errors.
17	I feel embarrassed in front of others if I pronounce a simple and easy word incorrectly.
18	I prefer to prepare too much and search for the phonetic transcript prior to the class if I was expected to read in the class.

No.	Statements
19	I feel irritated if I encounter a word that I do not know how it is pronounced.
20	I prefer silent reading rather than reading aloud.
21	When I am reading aloud, I focus on reading correctly rather than focusing on understanding the text.
22	In reading aloud in the class, I do not understand the text even though it is easy.
23	I enjoy silent reading because I can easily understand the text.
24	When reading English aloud in the class I focus on word accent rather than understanding.
25	I get upset when I am not sure whether I understand or not what I am reading in English.
26	When reading English, I get disturbed and do not remember what I have read.

Table 5. The category level of reading anxiety based on total scores (Gonen, 2007)

No	Score in Percentage	Category Level
1	1% – 42%	Low
2	43% – 57%	Medium
3	>58%	High

(Source: The category level of FLRA according to Gonen, 2007)

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Finding

3.1.1. Descriptive statistics

3.1.1.1. The pre- and post-intervention outcomes for the experimental group

Table 6. The experimental class's pre-response and post-response scores

NO	Student Initial Name	EFL College Students' Pre-Response	Reading Anxiety Post-Response
1	AF	115	98
2	DSA	81	87
3	FZ	97	93
4	FAD	103	113
5	HSD	97	101
6	HAT	78	78
7	HP	89	86
8	HWP	81	52
9	HP	90	96
10	IY	77	109
11	KLY	102	95
12	LAT	103	85
13	MFA	73	50
14	MWP	91	72
15	MP	106	109
16	MO	109	82
17	MDA	82	81
18	OS	85	86

NO	Student Initial Name	EFL College Students' Pre-Response	Reading Anxiety Post-Response
19	RAP	102	86
20	RP	81	65
21	RC	86	80
22	SPY	83	89
23	SE	89	83
24	S	111	96
25	SPZ	77	51
26	ST	86	74
27	SFA	97	101
28	TDP	98	95
29	UFJ	108	113
30	ZZ	101	104
31	ZAS	52	60
32	ZS	103	95
Score Average		91.66	86.41

(Source: The researchers' data collection)

Table 7. Descriptive statistics of the experimental class's scores

	Descriptive Statistics				
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Pre-Reading Anxiety	32	52	115	91.66	13.533
Post-Reading Anxiety	32	50	113	86.41	17.242
Valid N (listwise)	32				

(Source: Personal data processing using SPSS 25)

In the pre-response reading anxiety, the mean score of the experimental class's initial reading anxiety was 91.66 or 70.51%, and after consulting the Category Level of Reading Anxiety based on Total Scores FLRAS by Gonen (2007), it was categorized as high-level anxiety (more than 58%). After the students finished the reading treatment, the post-response reading anxiety was administered to see whether there was a change in students' reading anxiety after reading 15 stories from *prathambooks.org* completed with structured exercises. As a result, the mean score of the post-response reading anxiety decreased to 86.41 or 66.47%. Despite remaining in the high-anxiety category, the use of digital children's literature from *Prathambooks.org* as reading material resulted in a 4.04% reduction in reading anxiety.

3.1.1.2. Pre- and post-intervention results for the control group

Table 8. The control class's pre-response and post-response scores

No.	Student Initial Name	EFL College Students' Reading Anxiety	
		Pre-Response	Post-Response
1	AFS	90	93
2	AFA	72	56

No.	Student Initial Name	EFL College Students' Reading Anxiety	
		Pre-Response	Post-Response
3	ASS	87	84
4	ASS	107	88
5	AHH	79	81
6	AAA	86	103
7	AFF	51	91
8	AAI	93	85
9	ACA	92	85
10	ARA	84	85
11	AAS	87	80
12	ADA	111	97
13	ABB	103	119
14	CPK	77	77
15	DAA	91	76
16	DTA	75	75
17	FTD	98	82
18	FRM	77	93
19	IAF	83	82
20	IPS	101	101
21	IKK	103	104
22	JMM	65	55
23	JDY	83	92
24	MHS	69	82
25	THH	94	99
26	TAF	69	72
27	TPP	76	116
28	VDP	50	52
29	VAA	61	101
30	WRS	39	79
31	WAA	119	123
32	ZNA	67	87
Score Average		82.47	87.34

(Source: The researchers' data collection)

Table 9. Descriptive statistics of the control class's scores

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Pre-Reading Anxiety	32	39	119	82.47	18.210
Post-Reading Anxiety	32	52	123	87.34	16.556
Valid N (listwise)	32				

(Source: Personal data processing using SPSS 25)

The control class's mean score of pre-response reading anxiety was 82.47 or 63.43%, and was categorized as high-level anxiety (more than 58%) according to the Category Level of

Reading Anxiety based on Total Scores FLRAS by Gonen (2007). Then, the students in the control class were learning autonomously without the lecturer's guidance in using technology to support their reading practice. They did not receive any treatment or structured exercises related to integrating picture books on *prathambooks.org* during this period. However, they were introduced to the *prathambooks.org* website when they took the Introduction to Literature subject. The control class received the post-response of the reading anxiety questionnaire after the experimental class finished their treatment. The mean score of post-response reading anxiety was 87.34 or 67.18%. The result showed that during that time the students' reading anxiety in the control class increased by about 3.75%.

Table 10. The difference between pre-and post-response's mean

Class		Pre-Response Mean	Post-Response Mean	Differences
Experimental	Reading Anxiety	70.51	66.47	- 4.04
Control	Reading Anxiety	63.43	67.18	3.75

*The mean score converted into percentage max. score 100

3.1.2. Statistical Analysis

3.1.2.1. Normality Test

Prior to the paired sample t-test, a Shapiro-Wilk normality test was conducted using SPSS 25, given the sample size of less than 50 per class.

Table 11. The normality of the experimental class's scores

Tests of Normality				
EXPERIMENTAL CLASS		Shapiro-Wilk		
		Statistic	df	Sig.
READING ANXIETY	PRE-RESPONSE	.956	32	.210
	POST-RESPONSE	.946	32	.111

(Source: Personal data processing using SPSS 25)

The Shapiro-Wilk test revealed significance values exceeding 0.05 for both pre- and post-responses in the experimental class (0.210 and 0.111 respectively), indicating normal distribution.

Table 12. The normality of the control class's scores

Tests of Normality				
CONTROL CLASS		Shapiro-Wilk		
		Statistic	df	Sig.
READING ANXIETY	PRE-RESPONSE	.989	32	.980
	POST-RESPONSE	.963	32	.334

(Source: Personal data processing using SPSS 25)

Shapiro-Wilk test results for the control group showed significance values above 0.05 for both pre- and post-responses (0.980 and 0.334 respectively), confirming normal distribution.

3.1.2.2. Homogeneity Test

The homogeneity test was used by the researchers to prove that the data were homogeneous.

Table 13. The Homogeneity Test of the Experimental Class's Scores

Test of Homogeneity of Variance					
		Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
READING ANXIETY	Based on Mean	.850	1	62	.360
	Based on Median	.871	1	62	.354
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	.871	1	55.912	.355
	Based on trimmed mean	.824	1	62	.368

(Source: Personal data processing using SPSS 25)

Table 14. Homogeneity Test of Control Class

Test of Homogeneity of Variance					
		Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
READING ANXIETY	Based on Mean	.480	1	62	.491
	Based on Median	.506	1	62	.480
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	.506	1	61.998	.480
	Based on trimmed mean	.457	1	62	.501

(Source: Personal data processing using SPSS 25)

The homogeneity test revealed significance values above 0.05 for EFL college students' reading anxiety mean scores (0.360 and 0.491), indicating homogeneity in the data.

3.1.2.3. Hypothesis Test

Given the data's normal distribution and homogeneity, a paired sample t-test was conducted using SPSS 25 to assess significant differences between pre- and post-response scores. Decisions were based on the significance value and t-value from the test results. The researchers also validated the data to a data validator, Dr. Muharika Dewi, S.ST., M.PdT., a lecturer from the Faculty of Tourism and Hospitality, UNP. The assumptions of paired sample t-test, are as follows: (a) If the Sig. of two-tailed is lower than ($<$) 0.05, it means that the Null Hypothesis (H_0) is rejected and the Alternative Hypothesis (H_a) is accepted, (b) If the Sig. of two-tailed is higher than ($>$) 0.05, it means that the Null Hypothesis (H_0) is accepted and the Alternative Hypothesis (H_a) is rejected, or (c) If the t-value $>$ t-table, the Alternative Hypothesis (H_a) is accepted, (d) If the t-value $<$ t-table, the Alternative Hypothesis (H_a) is rejected.

Table 15. The result of paired samples statistics

Paired Samples Statistics							
				Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Pre-Response (Exp)	Reading	Anxiety	91.66	32	13.533	2.392
	Post-Response (Exp)	Reading	Anxiety	86.41	32	17.242	3.048
Pair 2	Pre-Response (Ctrl)	Reading	Anxiety	82.47	32	18.210	3.219
	Post-Response (Ctrl)	Reading	Anxiety	87.34	32	16.556	2.927

(Source: Personal data processing using SPSS 25)

Table 16. The result of hypothesis test

Paired Samples Test									
		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Pre-Exp								
	- Post-Exp	5.250	13.125	2.320	.518	9.982	2.263	31	.031
Pair 2	Pre-Ctrl								
	- Post-Ctrl	4.875	16.777	2.966	1.174	10.924	1.644	31	.110

(Source: Personal data processing using SPSS 25)

Based on the paired sample test results for both experimental and control classes, the alternative hypothesis (H_a) was accepted, and the null hypothesis (H_0) was rejected. This was because the Sig. (2-tailed) of the experimental class (Pair 1) was less than 0.05 ($0.31 < 0.05$) and the t-value of Pair 1 was higher than 2.039 ($2.263 > 2.039$), the t-table for df 31 is 2.039. The result showed that students in the experimental class who learned with a guided learning approach and followed 15 days of reading treatment using picture books on *prathambooks.org* completed with structured exercises decreased their reading anxiety statistically significantly by about 4.04 %.

Meanwhile, the Sig. (2-tailed) of the control class (Pair 2) was higher than 0.05 ($.110 > 0.05$) and the t-value of Pair 2 was also less than 2.039 ($1.644 < 2.039$). The result showed that students in the control class who learned with an autonomous learning approach without any treatments and structured exercises increased their reading anxiety statistically insignificant by about 3.75% during the time. In conclusion, EFL college students' reading anxiety at the English Department UNP decreased statistically significantly when the

students used digital children's literature from *Prathambooks.org* with structured exercises as reading material.

3.2. Discussion

Further analysis was conducted on students' reading anxiety responses to each statement in the questionnaire. From the following table, it is evident that students' reading anxiety regarding text features could be decreased by about 0.63% to 11.25% by following reading daily activity using picture book stories on *prathambooks.org*. Specifically, their anxiety about unknown vocabulary decreased by about 11.25% and this relates to the previous research which informs that students' vocabularies are increased after the treatment. Moreover, students' reading anxiety from their personal factors was also reduced by about 1.88% to 9.4% after reading stories from digital children's literature *prathambooks.org*.

Table 17. Decrease range of reading anxiety based on Ahmad et al., (2013)

Aspects	Domain	Number of Statement	Decrease Range
Text Features	Unknown Vocabulary	6	1.25% - 11.25%
	Unfamiliar Topic	4	1.88% - 5.63%
	Unfamiliar Culture	5	0.63% - 6.3%
Personal Factors	Afraid of Making Errors	5	1.88% - 7.5%
	Worry About Reading Effects	6	2.5% - 9.4%
Decrease Range Text Features		15	0.63% - 11.25%
Decrease Range Personal Factors		11	1.88% - 9.4%

The finding of this research answered the challenge by Asnita & Marlina (2022) in conducting further research on the use of digital children's literature from other sources and other genres. In this research, 15 Level 4 stories from *prathambooks.org* with various genres were selected as reading treatment within 15 days. The results support the previous study which informed that children's literature is effective in improving students' vocabulary and decreasing their reading anxiety. Digital children's literature from *Prathambooks.org*, like printed children's books, significantly reduces EFL college students' reading anxiety. This study extends previous research by Ahwida & Marlina (2023) on the impact of digital children's literature from *Storynory.com* on EFL college students' listening anxiety. The finding of this research supports the previous research which said that digital children's literature was effective in decreasing listening anxiety. Besides, the digital children's literature *prathambooks.org* with its *StoryWeaver* feature also can expand students' vocabularies.

To sum up, the increase in students' vocabularies and the decrease in their reading anxiety might be influenced by several factors. The first was because the stories used as the reading treatment were authentic picture books with engaging illustrations, natural language, and new cultures on *prathambooks.org*. Then, the themes of selected stories could be enjoyed by adult learners. The second was because the reading treatment was completed with structured

exercises in the form of reading questions, vocabulary exercises, and vocabulary list. The third was because the experimental class who followed the reading treatment taught using guided learning approach. It is in line with Brown & Lee (2015, p. 75), who state that guided practice, strategy training, and permitting some creative innovation within constrained forms are needed in introducing students to learning autonomy.

Even though the findings answered the research questions, there might be a bias in students' reading anxiety levels in the control class. The finding showed that students' reading anxiety increased statistically insignificant by about 3.75% during the period of time. The results might be influenced by the fact that students in the control class were not provided with any treatments or structured exercises. In other words, this class employed autonomous use of technology without guided exercises in using *prathambooks.org*. However, in applying autonomous use of technology in language learning, adequate support and direction from the lecturers are still essential (Yu, 2023, p. 2). As a result, the researchers do not recommend other researchers to employ autonomous learning in integrating technology-based literacy on EFL college students without any guidance or any structured assignment.

4. Conclusion

This study demonstrates that using digital children's literature from *Prathambooks.org* as reading material, supplemented with structured exercises, significantly reduces reading anxiety among EFL college students at Universitas Negeri Padang's English Department. These findings support the incorporation of digital children's literature as pleasure reading material in reading classes. However, it's crucial to note that instructor guidance and structured exercises remain essential for maximizing the benefits of technology-based literacy in the teaching and learning process.

Given that this research focused solely on Level 4 picture book stories for EFL college students, there is ample opportunity for further investigation. Future studies could explore the effectiveness of other story formats available on *Prathambooks.org*, particularly utilizing the *StoryWeaver* feature. Additionally, researchers could examine the impact of these digital resources on other language skills and across various age groups of EFL learners. Such expansions would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the potential benefits of digital children's literature in EFL education.

References

- Abdul-ameer, M. A. (2014). Improving vocabulary learning through digital stories with Iraqi young learners of English at the primary level. *Journal of Studies in Social Sciences*, 8(2), 197–214.
- Ahmad, I. S., Al-Shboul, M. M., Rahman, Z. A., Burhan, M., & Basha Madarsha, K. (2013). The potential sources of foreign language reading anxiety in a Jordanian EFL context:

- A theoretical framework. *English Language Teaching*, 6(11), 89–110. <https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v6n11p89>
- Ahwida, A., & Marlina, L. (2023). Digital children's literature storynory. com impact to English Department UNP's listening anxiety of EFL college students. *I2(3)*. <https://doi.org/10.24036/jelt.v13i2.124782>
- Asnita, J., & Marlina, L. (2022). The use of English children's literature to enrich EFL college students' vocabularies and reduce their reading anxiety at English Department UNP. *Journal of English Language Teaching*, 11(2), 249–262. <https://doi.org/10.24036/jelt.v11i2.117297>
- Brown, H. D., & Lee, H. (2015). *Teaching by principles: An interactive approach to language pedagogy* (4th ed.). Pearson Education, Inc.
- Creswell, J. (2012). *Educational research: Planning, conducting and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research* (4th ed.). Pearson Education, Inc.
- English, L. M. (2000). Children's literature for adults: A meaningful paradox. In *PAACE Journal of Lifelong Learning* (Vol. 9, pp. 13–23).
- Fadhilah, H., & Marlina, L. (2022). An analysis of EFL college students' anxieties in listening and reading skills at English Department FBS UNP. *Journal of English Language Teaching*, 11(2), 205–215. <https://doi.org/10.24036/jelt.v11i2.117293>
- Gonen, K. S. I. (2007). L2 reading anxiety: Exploring the phenomenon. *JALT 2006 Conference Proceedings*, 1029–1038.
- Haviza, E., & Marlina, L. (2022). The use of anecdote stories to enrich EFL college students' vocabularies and to reduce their reading anxiety at English. *Journal of English Language Teaching*, 11(2), 238–248. <https://doi.org/10.24036/jelt.v11i2.117245>
- Isnawan, M. G. (2020). *Kuasi eksperimen* (Sudirman (ed.)). Nashir Al-Kutub Indonesia.
- Jalongo, M. R., & Hirsh, R. A. (2010). Understanding reading anxiety: New insights from neuroscience. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 37(6), 431–435. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10643-010-0381-5>
- Kamil, I., & Fitrawati. (2023). The EFL learners' reading anxiety level at English Department UNP. *Journal of English Language Teaching*, 12(1), 300–312. <https://doi.org/10.24036/jelt.v12i1.121549>
- Lee, H.-N. (2015). Using picture books in EFL college reading classrooms. *Reading Matrix: An International Online Journal*, 15(1), 66–77.
- Marlina, L. (2013). Learning English as foreign language in Indonesia through English children's literature. *International Journal of Literacies*, 19(4), 41–51. <https://doi.org/10.18848/2327-0136/cgp/v19i04/48801>
- Muhlis, A. (2017). Foreign language reading anxiety among Indonesian EFL senior high school students. *English Franca: Academic Journal of English Language and Education*, 1(1), 19. <https://doi.org/10.29240/ef.v1i1.160>
- Nurgiyantoro, B. (2010). *Sastra anak: Pengantar pemahaman dunia anak*. Gadjah Mada University Press.

- Pulimeno, M., Piscitelli, P., & Colazzo, S. (2020). Children's literature to promote students' global development and wellbeing. *Health Promotion Perspectives, 10*(1), 13–23. <https://doi.org/10.15171/hpp.2020.05>
- Smith, F. (2004). *Understanding reading: A psycholinguistic analysis of reading and learning to read* (6th ed.). Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc. *StoryWeaver: Prathambooks*. (2023, May 10). Retrieved from Pratham Books: <https://storyweaver.org.in/>
- Yu, L. T. (2023). A comparison of the autonomous use of technology for language learning for EFL university students of different proficiency levels. *Sustainability (Switzerland), 15*(1). <https://doi.org/10.3390/su15010606>