



Developing a YouTube-Based Digital Storytelling Video to Support Students' Understanding of Narrative Text

Bethanya Br Sipahutar^{1*}, Sarah Ramadani², Anggraini Thesisia Saragih³, Khairul Azmi Siagian⁴

¹⁻⁴ Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris, Universitas Negeri Medan, Indonesia

* Corresponding Author: bethasphtr@gmail.com¹

Abstract. *This study aims to develop a storytelling-based learning media in the form of a YouTube video to support students' understanding of narrative text based on their learning needs. This study employed a Research and Development (R&D) design using the ADDIE model, focusing on the stages of analysis and development. The data were collected through a questionnaire as part of the needs analysis to identify students' responses toward listening and repetition activities, as well as the difficulties they face in understanding narrative texts. The results show that students generally respond positively to listening and repetition. However, they still experience difficulties in understanding the storyline and vocabulary. The findings also indicate that students need learning support in the form of audio, visual elements, and vocabulary assistance. Based on these findings, a learning product was developed in the form of a YouTube-based digital storytelling video entitled "Learn Narrative Text Through Fun Storytelling (Listen, Repeat & Retell)". The video integrates storytelling, repetition, vocabulary explanation, and speaking practice to support students' comprehension. Due to time limitations, this study was limited to the development of a prototype and has not yet included expert validation. Therefore, future research is recommended to conduct validation to evaluate the feasibility and effectiveness of the developed product.*

Keywords: ADDIE Model; Digital Storytelling; Narrative Text; R&D; Youtube Video.

1. The Background of The Study

Learning English as a foreign language requires students to develop several essential skills, including listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Among these skills, reading comprehension, especially in understanding narrative texts, remains a challenge for many students. Narrative texts require students not only to understand vocabulary but also to follow the sequence of events and interpret the meaning of the story as a whole.

In classroom practice, narrative texts are commonly taught through reading activities followed by comprehension questions. While this method may help students identify specific information, it often does not support deeper understanding. Many students are still confused when trying to connect events, understand the storyline, and capture the overall message of the text. As a result, students may lose interest and feel less confident in learning English, particularly when dealing with longer or more complex texts.

From a psycholinguistic perspective, language learning involves how learners receive, process, and produce language. Students need meaningful input to understand language, as well as opportunities to process and use it actively. Listening activities can provide rich input by exposing students to pronunciation, intonation, and sentence patterns. Meanwhile, repetition can help strengthen memory and improve students' ability to retain vocabulary and expressions. In addition, speaking activities encourage students to produce language, which is

important in developing their overall language competence.

Based on the needs analysis conducted through a questionnaire, it was found that most students respond positively to listening and repetition activities. They feel that these activities help them understand English more easily. However, the findings also show that some students still experience difficulties in understanding narrative texts, particularly in terms of vocabulary and following the storyline. These difficulties indicate that students need additional support to help them process and understand the material more effectively.

Furthermore, the results of the needs analysis reveal that students prefer learning activities that involve audio and visual elements. They tend to understand the material better when it is presented in a more engaging and interactive way. This suggests that the use of multimedia learning can play an important role in supporting students' comprehension. However, in many cases, the learning media used in teaching narrative texts are still limited and do not fully integrate storytelling, audio-visual support, and interactive elements.

Considering these conditions, there is a gap in the availability of learning media that can effectively support students in understanding narrative texts. In particular, there is a lack of interactive storytelling media that integrates audio, visual elements, and vocabulary support based on students' needs. Most existing learning approaches still rely on conventional methods, which may not fully engage students or address their learning difficulties.

Therefore, this study aims to develop a prototype of a YouTube-based digital storytelling video as a multimedia learning medium for narrative text. The product is designed based on students' needs by integrating storytelling, listening, repetition, and visual support. Through this approach, it is expected that students can better understand narrative texts and become more engaged in the learning process.

2. THEORETICAL REVIEW

The teaching and learning of narrative texts in English as a foreign language (EFL) are closely associated with the constructivist view of learning, which emphasizes that knowledge is actively constructed through interaction between learners, texts, and prior experiences (Vygotsky, 1978). Within this perspective, reading comprehension is not limited to decoding linguistic elements but involves a complex process of meaning-making in which learners interpret, connect, and reconstruct ideas embedded in the text. Narrative texts, with their distinctive structure of orientation, complication, and resolution, require learners to engage cognitively and imaginatively in order to comprehend both explicit and implicit meanings (Harmer, 1998). Consequently, instructional approaches that promote active engagement are

essential to support students' comprehension.

Storytelling has been increasingly recognized as a pedagogical approach that aligns with both constructivist and sociocultural theories. Storytelling enables learners to engage with language in meaningful contexts through listening, interpreting, and retelling stories, thereby facilitating deeper comprehension (Wright et al., 1995). From a sociocultural perspective, storytelling functions as a mediational tool that supports learning through social interaction and shared meaning-making (Vygotsky, 1978). Furthermore, storytelling integrates cognitive, emotional, and social dimensions of learning, which are considered essential for effective language acquisition (Brewster et al., 2017). The emotional engagement fostered through storytelling is particularly significant, as it enhances learners' motivation and supports the retention of information.

The effectiveness of storytelling can also be understood through the lens of experiential learning theory, which posits that learning occurs through experience and reflection. In storytelling activities, learners are actively involved in experiencing narratives rather than passively receiving information, allowing them to internalize and reinterpret meaning. This aligns with the concept of student engagement, which encompasses cognitive, emotional, and behavioral involvement in the learning process (Fredricks et al., 2004). Therefore, storytelling provides a comprehensive learning environment that supports both engagement and comprehension, particularly in the context of narrative text learning.

(Lap & Thy, 2022), reported that storytelling significantly enhanced students' engagement and comprehension by encouraging active participation and interaction in the classroom. Similarly, (Nguyen & Phillips, 2025) found that storytelling contributed to increased motivation and improved learning outcomes, particularly when implemented through interactive classroom activities. These findings suggest that storytelling can serve as an effective alternative to traditional, teacher-centered instructional methods.

In addition, the integration of digital storytelling has gained attention as an innovative approach in language learning. (Irmawati & Wahyuni, 2025) demonstrated that digital storytelling improved students' understanding of narrative structures while fostering creativity and self-expression. Likewise, (Pratama, 2018) found that students expressed positive perceptions toward storytelling-based learning, indicating that the method helped them better understand narrative texts and increased their interest in learning English. Despite these contributions, such studies often emphasize technological integration and measurable outcomes rather than exploring the experiential dimensions of learning.

First, the majority of studies employ quantitative or mixed-method approaches that focus

primarily on measurable outcomes, such as test scores and achievement levels. While these findings provide valuable evidence of effectiveness, they offer limited insight into how students subjectively experience storytelling as a learning method. Second, existing qualitative studies tend to focus on specific language skills, such as speaking or writing, rather than on reading comprehension of narrative texts. Third, the contexts of previous research vary considerably, with many studies conducted at the primary or senior high school level, leaving the junior high school context particularly grade VIII relatively underexplored.

Furthermore, although previous studies acknowledge the importance of engagement and motivation, they often treat these constructs as variables to be measured rather than as lived experiences to be understood. As a result, aspects such as students' emotional responses, interpretative processes, and meaning-making experiences remain insufficiently explored. This indicates a need for a more in-depth qualitative investigation that captures the complexity of students' experiences in learning through storytelling.

The present study adopts a qualitative interpretative approach to explore students' experiences and perceptions of using storytelling in learning narrative texts. Positioned within a constructivist paradigm, this study views learning as a process of meaning construction shaped by individual and social experiences. Unlike previous studies that focus on outcomes, this research seeks to understand how students experience, interpret, and respond to storytelling in the classroom context. The novelty of this study lies in its focus on the subjective experiences of grade VIII junior high school students in the Indonesian EFL context, as well as its emphasis on exploring meaning-making processes rather than solely measuring learning outcomes.

This study is expected to contribute theoretically to the understanding of storytelling as an experiential and student-centered approach in language learning. Practically, it provides insights for educators in designing more engaging and meaningful instructional practices, particularly in teaching narrative texts. Ultimately, this study aims to offer a deeper understanding of how storytelling shapes students' engagement and comprehension from the learners' perspective.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employed a Research and Development (R&D) design with the aim of developing a learning media based on students' needs in understanding narrative texts. Unlike a purely qualitative study that focuses only on exploring students' experiences, this study not only analyzes students' needs but also produces a prototype of a learning product. The model used in this study is ADDIE, which consists of five stages: Analysis, Design, Development,

Implementation, and Evaluation. However, due to time limitations, this study was only carried out up to the Development stage.

The first stage was the Analysis stage, which focused on identifying students' needs and learning difficulties. In this stage, data were collected through an online questionnaire distributed using Google Forms. The participants consisted of 24 junior high school students, mostly from grade VIII, who had learned narrative texts in their English classes. The participants were selected through convenience sampling, considering the researchers' limited access to formal school settings.

The questionnaire was designed to capture students' responses toward learning activities, especially listening and repetition, as well as the challenges they face in understanding narrative texts. The questions also explored students' preferences in learning, including their interest in using audio and visual media. From the collected responses, it was found that most students showed positive attitudes toward listening and repetition activities. They felt that these activities helped them understand the material more easily. However, several students still reported difficulties, particularly in understanding vocabulary and following the sequence of events in a story.

These findings indicate that students need additional support that can help them process information more effectively. In particular, they need learning media that combines audio, visual elements, and vocabulary support in an engaging way. Therefore, the results of this stage served as the main basis for designing the learning product.

The next stage was the Design stage. Based on the results of the needs analysis, the researchers designed a learning media in the form of a YouTube-based digital storytelling video. At this stage, the researchers determined the learning objectives, selected the appropriate narrative text, and organized the structure of the video content.

The story chosen for the video was *Malin Kundang*, as it is a familiar folktale that allows students to focus more on understanding the language rather than the storyline itself. The video was designed to include several sections, such as an introduction, storytelling session, repetition activities, vocabulary explanation, comprehension questions, and retelling practice. Each section was planned to support different aspects of language learning, including input, practice, and production.

The final stage in this study was the Development stage. In this stage, the designed product was developed into a prototype. The process began with script writing, followed by recording and video editing. The researchers created the video by combining narration, visual elements, and subtitles to make the content clearer and more engaging for students.

The final product is a YouTube-based digital storytelling video entitled “*Learn Narrative Text Through Fun Storytelling (Listen, Repeat & Retell)*”. The video integrates storytelling, repetition, vocabulary support, and speaking practice to help students understand narrative texts in a more interactive way.

It is important to note that this study was limited to the development of a prototype due to time constraints. The implementation and evaluation stages of the ADDIE model were not conducted in this study. Therefore, the product has not yet been validated by experts or tested for its effectiveness in classroom settings. Future research is recommended to continue these stages in order to evaluate the feasibility and effectiveness of the developed product.

4. RESULT

Needs Analysis

The data obtained from the questionnaire provide an overview of students' experiences in learning narrative text, particularly when storytelling is used as a teaching method. In general, most students reported positive experiences. They described storytelling as an enjoyable and engaging approach that makes learning more interesting compared to traditional text-based methods. Through storytelling, students felt that they could understand the storyline more easily and remember the structure of narrative text, such as orientation, complication, and resolution. In addition, the way the story is delivered, including the use of expressions and intonation, also plays an important role in supporting students' comprehension.

However, not all students had the same experience. A small number of students stated that they had never experienced storytelling in their learning process. This limited their ability to fully engage with the method and understand its benefits. This finding shows that storytelling has not been consistently implemented in classroom practice.

In terms of learning difficulties, the findings show that students still face several challenges in understanding narrative text. The most dominant difficulty is related to limited vocabulary. Many students reported that they often encounter unfamiliar words, which makes it difficult for them to understand the overall meaning of the story. In addition, students also experience difficulties in constructing sentences and retelling the story using their own words. Some students expressed a lack of confidence when speaking in English, especially when they are required to perform in front of others.

Furthermore, the comparison between storytelling and conventional learning methods reveals a clear difference in students' perceptions. Learning through textbooks alone is often

considered less engaging and sometimes monotonous. Students find it difficult to imagine the storyline when they rely only on written texts without any visual or auditory support. On the other hand, storytelling creates a more interactive and meaningful learning experience, which helps students follow the story more easily.

Another important finding is related to the role of media in learning. Students showed a strong preference for audio-visual media, such as videos and animations. They believe that visual and auditory support helps them understand the story better and makes the learning process more interesting. Some students specifically mentioned that videos, including those from YouTube, help them visualize the story and reduce boredom.

Based on these findings, it can be concluded that students need learning media that combines storytelling with audio-visual elements and vocabulary support. They also need opportunities to actively participate, such as practicing retelling the story. Therefore, these results serve as the basis for developing a storytelling-based learning media that is more interactive and aligned with students' needs.

The Design and Development of Storytelling Media Prototype

Based on the results of the needs analysis, a learning product was designed and developed to address the identified problems. The product is a YouTube-based digital storytelling video entitled "*Learn Narrative Text Through Fun Storytelling (Listen, Repeat & Retell)*". This product was developed as a prototype learning media that integrates storytelling, repetition, vocabulary support, and speaking practice.

The design of the video was based on students' needs for audio-visual learning and vocabulary assistance. Therefore, the video includes several key components. First, the storytelling section presents the narrative text in a clear and structured way, allowing students to follow the sequence of events more easily. The use of narration, expression, and intonation helps make the story more engaging.

Second, the repetition session is included to encourage students to actively participate. In this section, students are given time to repeat key sentences from the story. This activity helps improve pronunciation and reinforces their understanding of important expressions.

Third, the video provides vocabulary support by introducing key words from the story along with their meanings. This is intended to address students' main difficulty in understanding unfamiliar words. By learning vocabulary in context, students can better understand the story as a whole.

In addition, the video also includes comprehension questions and a retelling activity. These activities are designed to help students check their understanding and practice expressing the story in their own words. This supports both comprehension and speaking skills.

The development process involved script writing, recording, and video editing. The video was designed using simple but clear visual elements, subtitles, and audio narration to ensure that the content is easy to understand and engaging for students.



Figure 1. Opening scene of the storytelling video.



Figure 2. Storytelling session with subtitles.



Figure 3. Vocabulary and repetition section.



Figure 4. Vocabulary and repetition section.

The prototype of this video reflects the integration of psycholinguistic principles, where students receive input through listening, process information through repetition and understanding, and produce language through speaking activities.

On the whole, the developed product is expected to provide a more interactive and meaningful learning experience. Although this study has not yet reached the stage of product validation, the prototype has been designed based on students' actual needs, making it relevant as a learning support media.

Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that storytelling is not only an alternative method, but can function as a meaningful approach in helping students understand narrative texts. From the responses collected, it can be seen that students tend to be more engaged when the material is delivered through storytelling compared to conventional text-based learning. They do not only receive the material, but also follow the flow of the story, which makes the learning process feel more natural and less demanding. This supports recent views in language teaching that emphasize the importance of creating learning environments where students are actively involved and emotionally connected to the material (Mayer, 2024).

When students listen to a story, they are not focusing on individual words only, but on the overall meaning. This helps them understand how events are connected and how a story develops from beginning to end. In this study, students mentioned that storytelling helped them follow the structure of narrative text more easily, especially in identifying orientation, complication, and resolution. This suggests that storytelling provides a clearer framework for students to process information. Similar findings have been highlighted in recent studies, which show that contextualized learning can support deeper comprehension, especially in language learning where meaning depends heavily on context (Dia, 2024)

Another important point that emerges from the findings is related to input. Students seem to benefit from listening to stories because it gives them exposure to language in a more complete and meaningful form. Even when they do not understand every single word, they can still catch the general idea of the story. This indicates that understanding does not always depend on vocabulary mastery alone, but also on how the information is presented. Recent perspectives in language learning also suggest that learners can develop comprehension when they are exposed to input that is understandable and slightly above their current level (Nation, 2022)

However, the findings also clearly show that vocabulary remains a major challenge. Many students reported that unfamiliar words often interrupt their understanding of the story. This is an important point, because it shows that while storytelling helps with engagement and general comprehension, it does not automatically solve all learning difficulties. Without vocabulary support, students may still struggle to fully understand the details of the story. This

is also in line with recent research which emphasizes that vocabulary knowledge plays a central role in reading and listening comprehension (Nation, 2022).

Another interesting finding is students' strong preference for audio-visual media. Many of them stated that videos help them understand the story better because they can both hear and see what is happening. This makes the learning process feel less monotonous and easier to follow. Compared to reading text only, video-based storytelling provides more support, especially for students who are still developing their language skills. This supports recent developments in digital learning, where multimedia is considered an important element in improving both engagement and comprehension (Moreno & Mayer, 2007)

These findings become even more meaningful when connected to the product developed in this study. The YouTube-based digital storytelling video was designed specifically to respond to these needs. For example, the inclusion of repetition activities is intended to help students process and remember key expressions. The vocabulary section directly addresses students' difficulty with unfamiliar words. Meanwhile, the use of visuals and subtitles is meant to support comprehension and reduce cognitive load.

In other words, the product is not created randomly, but is closely based on what students actually need. This is one of the strengths of this study, as the development process is grounded in real classroom-related data. The integration of storytelling, repetition, and multimedia elements reflects a more holistic approach to language learning, where students are not only asked to understand but also to practice and engage actively with the material.

Even so, it is important to acknowledge that this study is still limited to the development stage. The product has not yet been tested in a real classroom setting, so its effectiveness cannot be fully measured. However, the design itself already shows potential as a learning medium that is more aligned with students' needs compared to conventional methods.

Overall, the discussion suggests that storytelling, when supported by appropriate media and additional learning strategies, can play a significant role in improving students' understanding of narrative texts. It is not just about telling a story, but about how the story is delivered, supported, and practiced. This combination appears to be key in creating a learning experience that is both meaningful and effective for students.

5. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Based on the findings of the needs analysis and the development process, this study presents several conclusions and suggestions for future improvement of the developed product.

Conclusion

This study was conducted to develop a learning media based on students' needs in understanding narrative texts. The findings from the needs analysis show that although students respond positively to storytelling, they still experience difficulties, particularly in vocabulary and understanding the storyline. In addition, students express a preference for learning through audio-visual media, which they find more engaging and easier to follow.

Based on these findings, a YouTube-based digital storytelling video was successfully developed as a prototype learning product. The video is designed by integrating several key components, including storytelling, repetition activities, vocabulary explanation, comprehension questions, and retelling practice. Each component is intended to support different aspects of language learning, such as providing input, reinforcing understanding, and encouraging students to actively use the language.

One of the main strengths of the developed product is its use of multimedia elements, such as audio narration, visual support, and subtitles, which help students better understand the content of the story. In addition, the inclusion of repetition and vocabulary sections directly addresses the main difficulties identified in the needs analysis. This shows that the product is not only theoretically designed but also closely aligned with students' actual learning needs.

Although the product has not yet been tested in a classroom setting, the prototype demonstrates potential as an alternative learning media that is more interactive and engaging compared to conventional methods. Therefore, this study contributes by providing a practical example of how storytelling can be developed into a multimedia-based learning product.

However, this study is limited to the development stage and has not included expert validation or effectiveness testing. Future research is recommended to evaluate the feasibility and impact of the developed product in real classroom contexts.

Suggestion

It is recommended that future research continue the development process by conducting expert validation and testing the effectiveness of the developed video in real classroom settings. Further studies may also improve the product by adding more interactive features, such as quizzes or student response activities, to enhance engagement. In addition, teachers are encouraged to adapt and use multimedia-based storytelling as an alternative learning strategy

to support students' understanding of narrative texts, especially by integrating vocabulary support and speaking practice.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors would like to express their sincere appreciation to Ma'am Anggraini Thesisia Saragih, S.Pd., M.Hum., and Sir Khairul Azmi Siagian, M.Pd., for their valuable guidance, constructive feedback, and continuous encouragement throughout the development of this study and the completion of this article. Their support has been instrumental in shaping both the research process and the final product.

The authors also extend their gratitude to the English Education Department of Universitas Negeri Medan for providing a supportive academic environment and the necessary resources to carry out this research. In addition, this article was developed as part of a research project conducted to fulfill the requirements of the "Creative Arts in English Language" course, particularly in developing a YouTube-based digital storytelling video as a learning medium.

REFERENCES

- Brewster, G. S., Peterson, L., Roker, R., Ellis, M. L., & Edwards, J. D. (2017). Depressive symptoms, cognition, and everyday function among community-residing older adults. *Journal of Aging and Health*, 29(3), 367-388. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0898264316635587>
- Dia, A. A. (2024). Teaching and learning English in the digital era: Opportunities and challenges. *Proceedings of The International Conference on Research in Teaching and Education*, 1(1), 13-25. <https://doi.org/10.33422/rteconf.v1i1.183>
- Drajati, N. A., Rakerda, H., Martono, Kusuma, I. P. I., Sulistyanningrum, S. D., & Ilmi, M. R. (2023). Adopting digital storytelling in English classrooms: Lessons learned from Indonesian EFL teachers' reflective practice. *Reflective Practice*, 24(4), 496-508. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14623943.2023.2210072>
- Harmer, J. (1998). *How to teach English*. Longman.
- Irmawati, M. R., & Wahyuni, S. (2025). Think Pair Share and Google Classroom in Teaching English for Young Learners: A Literature Review. *Language Circle: Journal of Language and Literature*, 19(2s), 294-310. <https://doi.org/10.15294/lc.v19i2s.31214>
- Lap, T. Q., & Thy, N. M. (2022). Using storytelling: From EFL teachers' perceptions to young learners' reading performance. *REFlections*, 29(2), 301-324. <https://doi.org/10.61508/refl.v29i2.259402>
- Mayer, R. E. (2024). The past, present, and future of the cognitive theory of multimedia learning. *Educational Psychology Review*, 36(1), 8. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10648-023-09842-1>

- Miao, X., & Li, L. (2024). Digital storytelling in EFL education: Learning outcomes and methodologies. *International Journal of English Language Studies*, 6(4), 06-11. <https://doi.org/10.32996/ijels.2024.6.4.2>
- Moreno, R., & Mayer, R. (2007). Interactive multimodal learning environments: Special issue on interactive learning environments: Contemporary issues and trends. *Educational Psychology Review*, 19(3), 309-326. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10648-007-9047-2>
- Nation, P. (2022). Teaching and learning vocabulary. In *Handbook of practical second language teaching and learning* (pp. 397-408). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003106609-33>
- Nguyen, T. T. P., & Phillips, L. G. (2025). How storytelling can work as a pedagogy to facilitate children's English as a foreign language learning. *Language Teaching Research*, 29(7), 3080-3103. <https://doi.org/10.1177/13621688221135481>
- Pratama, D. W. (2018). The use of story-telling method to improve students' social-care character in learning social studies. *International Jurnal Pedagogy of Social*, 9(1), 99-108.
- Salih, A. A., & Omar, L. I. (2024, November). Enhancing EFL learners' engagement in situational language skills through clustered digital materials. In *Frontiers in Education* (Vol. 9, p. 1439104). Frontiers Media SA. <https://doi.org/10.3389/feduc.2024.1439104>
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes* (Vol. 86). Harvard University Press.
- Wright, P., Ferris, S. P., Hiller, J. S., & Kroll, M. (1995). Competitiveness through management of diversity: Effects on stock price valuation. *Academy of Management Journal*, 38(1), 272-287. <https://doi.org/10.2307/256736>