

## **The Effectiveness of The Let's Read Application on Students' Reading Comprehension of Narrative Text**

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### **Abstract**

The Let's Read application was investigated to evaluate its effectiveness on students' ability to comprehend narrative passages. This research utilizes the pre-experimental approach, involving a one-group design that involved testing participants both prior to and following the intervention. There were 30 students as participants from class VIII A at SMP N 24 Pontianak during the 2023/2024 academic year, selected through cluster sampling. The data were gathered using measurement techniques, with tests used as the research instrument. The results revealed that the *Let's Read* application helps students comprehend narrative text. The treatments affected the post-test average (79,75), which was higher than the pre-test average (61,17). A t-test analysis produced a score of 12.55, which exceeded the critical value of 1.699 with 29 degrees of freedom and a 0.05 alpha level. This finding contradicted the initial hypothesis and confirmed the researcher's alternative hypothesis. In addition, the calculated effect size was 2.174, indicating a strong impact, as it was beyond the 0.5 range of effect sizes. Therefore, the study concludes that the implementation of *Let's Read* as an alternative media was effective in helping students comprehend the narrative text.

### **Key words**

Let's Read Application, Narrative Text, Pre-Experimental Design, Reading Comprehension, Teaching Media

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## **INTRODUCTION**

English is a compulsory subject at SMP Negeri 24 Pontianak. In mastering English, students experience difficulty that makes them lazy to learn. On the pre-observation, the teacher explained that it is difficult for students to master English because they struggle to understand reading, especially narrative text. According to Sapitri, Novia, and Rachmanita (2020) many students commonly face difficulties in comprehending narrative texts that are excessively wordy. The crucial problem is that students always find unfamiliar words, which makes it hard to comprehend the text (Guzel, 2022). They usually face many words they do not know. It makes them lose interest in reading, and their motivation to learn decreases.

The appropriate teaching media serve a substantial function in facilitating educational activities. Using appropriate complementary teaching media can help students feel comfortable in learning and avoid boredom. In this era, digital media is a teaching instrument that can attract students' attention. As the younger generation, students are bound by digital media. At SMP Negeri 24 Pontianak, various digital media have been integrated into teaching, such as the Zello app for developing speaking skills. However, the teacher still uses books as media in teaching reading. Students also have the assumption that reading, especially narrative text, is boring and confusing because they have difficulty comprehending the text.

To address students' difficulties, Let's Read, an alternative application, was investigated, aimed at supporting students' comprehension of narrative text. Let's Read is basically an e-book application that presents stories equipped with pictures. This application is a reading application that supports students in reading with attractive stories and pictures. The pictures presented are expected to help students comprehend the content, especially narrative stories.

Some researchers conducted studies involving Let's Read to teach English. According to Mardiah et al. (2022) Let's Read as instructional reading media positively impacts students' vocabulary improvement and prevents them from boredom. On the other side, Siregar, Nasution, and Pardi (2022) found that Let's Read supports students in understanding the material and improving their speaking skills through storytelling. From a comparison of previous research, the researcher identified both similarities and differences. The similarity was the Let's Read instructional reading media utilization to facilitate the English learning process.

While some research has explored some benefits of the "Let's Read" application, few have concentrated on its effectiveness in enhancing students' comprehension of narrative reading materials. This study offers a different focus in utilizing Let's Read to teach narrative comprehension on identifying the main ideas and supporting details, recognizing inference and reference of pronunciation, as well as understanding vocabulary in context. The researcher seeks to investigate the effectiveness of Let's Read towards students' comprehension of narrative text as an alternative reading media.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Teaching Reading Comprehension Skill**

Teaching reading comprehension skills is particularly challenging when the language is not the students' native tongue. Watkins (2017) stated that teaching foreign language reading focuses on synchronizing meaning with the language used rather than using a phonics approach. The students guess word by word and synchronize into their language to find the meaning of the reading (Butowska, Hanczakowski, & Zawadzka, 2022). It shows that students depend on at least adequate words when comprehending the texts. According to Delgado and Salmerón (2021) media selection is needed to improve students' reading comprehension skills. This means that teachers must select the appropriate media that can attract students and make them curious. Digital media can attract students to learn because they use it on a regular basis. It is crucial for teachers to keep up with technological advances (Fauziah & Nasrullah, 2023). It can help the teacher to give authentic and updated material that saves students from boredom. Therefore, selecting good reading media is important to help students and teachers in reading comprehension.

Reading comprehension is strongly bound to reading activities and cannot be separated (Mogea, 2023). It derives complete meaning from the text's capacity, requiring learners to grasp both the explicit and implicit messages conveyed by the writer. Reading comprehension involves actively constructing and extracting meaning through reader and text interaction (Kong, 2019). The data written in the text is collected and processed by integrating it with background knowledge to get meaningful information. Similarly, Yurko and Protsenko (2022) emphasize that reading comprehension emerges through the process of integrating new textual input with prior knowledge. Enhancing reading comprehension improves language acquisition and proficiency, which affects learning outcomes (Enni, Hasanah, & Ali, 2024). Although reading comprehension cannot develop automatically, it can be taught (Sukma, Mahjuddin, & Amelia, 2017). It means that reading comprehension can be learned and trained. Nurhayati and Najoan (2023) stated that students need to read frequently, making it a habit to train reading comprehension. It can help them recognize unfamiliar words or sentences. Those unfamiliar words or sentences, when read repeatedly, become their prior knowledge and improve their reading comprehension (Nasir, Syafitri, & Safitri, 2022). Reading comprehension enhancement improves language acquisition and proficiency, which supports learning outcomes. Consequently, reading comprehension refers to the capacity to thoroughly comprehend the content of the passage by integrating it with prior knowledge, enabling the reader to interpret and articulate its meaning in their own words.

Brown (2004) categorized the key aspects of reading comprehension into five components, such as recognizing the main idea and supporting detail, recognizing inference and reference of pronunciation, and understanding vocabulary in context. The main idea is the central message or idea of a paragraph or a story that the author tries to convey (Nisa, Safura, & Wicoksono, 2018). It is the idea that describes the entire text.

Supporting details are the statements that support and clarify the main idea (Millah, 2018). In other words, it is the statement that helps to explain the main idea. Inference is the implicit information the reader needs to access to help them comprehend the text's whole meaning (Bayat & Çetinkaya, 2020). It requires critical thinking by combining the clues with the background knowledge to produce new information that is unstated. Reference of pronunciation guides the reader with frequently used words repeatedly to avoid confusion (Fitriana, Wennyta, & Aisyah, 2022). It shows the relationship between the information served and the readers' comprehension skills (Crawford, Csomay, & Diego, 2024). Comprehending unfamiliar words will be easier if they are presented in context (Rahmalia, Gani, & Daud, 2019). The words' context help the reader to comprehend the text. The context is usually served in the form of a definition, synonym, or antonym.

### **The Description of Narrative Text**

Narrative text represents a form of literary genre designed to tell a story with the primary purpose of entertaining the reader. There are many forms of narrative text, such as fables, myths, legends, and personal experiences. According to Fauzia, Rianti, and Asilestari (2023) narrative text contains a story with a sequence of events involving several characters. These events are interconnected and show a causal relationship (Pointeau, Mirliaz, Mealier, & Dominey, 2021). Muliani, Norahmi, and Asi (2019) stated that a narrative text tells stories from the introduction until the problem is solved. In a narrative, the events occur step by step in accordance. Yunita and Patriadi (2020) stated that the feature that becomes the characteristic of narrative text is moral value. Moral value is always inserted in a narrative text, either explicitly or implicitly. It can help to build students' character to be better individuals (Ficanysha & Ahmad, 2022). The overall objective of a narrative text is to engage readers and provide entertainment. Wati and Gularso (2022) characterize fables as short narratives with a strong moral value that typically exemplify a particular trait. Anderson (1997, as cited in Pardosi, 2019) identified four generic elements of narrative texts: orientation, evaluation, complication, and resolution. According to Marzona and Ikhsan (2019), who referred to Gerot and Wignell (1994) there are several linguistic features common to narrative texts, including the use of both first- and third-person perspectives, temporal conjunctions to indicate time and place, using past tense, action verbs, and relational processes that describe actions or events. In conclusion, narrative text is a structured story aimed to entertain while imparting a moral lesson, characterized by a sequence of events, a distinct generic structure, and specific language features.

### **Overview of Let's Read Digital Tool**

In March 2017, The Asia Foundation launched Let's Read as an alternative reading platform. It is an alternative reading application that accommodates various e-books (online books) containing stories accompanied by attractive and colorful pictures. According to Chuang and Jamiat (2023) digital tools as alternative reading media provide updated and broad resources with interactive features. Reading application is one of the digital tools that advances students' lexical and comprehension through

connected pictures (Bus & Anstadt, 2021). On the Let' Read application, the stories are presented in some languages in Asia with an English version that can be used as teaching material. The stories are also displayed with adjustable levels and categories. Students can choose the stories according to their interests through the categories or the search button. The teacher can use the story as the material for teaching English by choosing it based on the students' reading level. The advantage of this application is that it can be accessed everywhere and at any time. All of the stories provided are free. It can be used online with an internet connection, and for offline access, the story can be downloaded so the students can enjoy it without an internet connection.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

To investigate the potential impact of the intervention on the specified outcome, the study employed a pre-experimental method using a single group that was assessed before and after the treatment. This was particularly intended to determine whether students' narrative reading comprehension improved with the implementation of Let's Read. A total of 154 students from the eighth grade of SMPN 24 Pontianak were involved as the population during the 2023/2024 school year. Using a cluster sampling technique, 30 students from Class VIIIA were selected as participants in the study. A test administered before and after the treatment served as the research instrument. Before the administration, the test was evaluated for validity and reliability. Content validity was applied to ensure the test measured what it was intended to, and KR-20 was used to assess the instrument's reliability.

In collecting the data, the researcher applied measurement techniques. It allows the researcher to arrive at a concise and precise conclusion. The researcher measured students' reading comprehension by looking at their reading outcomes in this research. These measurements were given before and after the students received treatment. Subsequently, the researcher calculated the t-test and effect size to analyze how the Let's Read program contributed to improving learners' understanding of narrative texts.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

The findings presented students' test results before and after treatment to achieve the purpose of the research. To gather the data, a preliminary test was carried out to evaluate students' comprehension of narrative text. The intervention of Let's Read was administered in three sessions. Then, a follow-up test was administered to identify improvements in students' comprehension abilities. Eventually, the scores were analyzed using statistical formulas. To analyze the data, there were some steps undertaken by the researcher. Furthermore, the research findings were as follows:

1. Students' test scores

**Tabel 1. Students' test scores**

No.	Students	Pre-test	Post-test
1.	AM	67,5	90
2.	AB	45	85

3.	AJ	60	77,5
4.	AA	62,5	72,5
5.	CA	67,5	80
6.	CW	55	85
7.	DF	55	82,5
8.	ES	50	70
9.	FA	65	82,5
10.	FR	52,5	75
11.	FS	62,5	70
12.	IY	65	85
13.	KR	67,5	85
14.	MW	65	75
15.	MN	67,5	87,5
16.	MA	60	75
17.	MF	62,5	87,5
18.	MM	62,5	82,5
19.	MZ	67,5	72,5
20.	NL	65	80
21.	NA	65	72,5
22.	PD	55	77,5
23.	RR	47,5	72,5
24.	RT	62,5	90
25.	RA	70	95
26.	RAS	60	70
27.	SB	67,5	80
28.	SF	65	75
29.	TV	65	77,5
30.	VD	52,5	82,5
$\Sigma$		<b>1.835</b>	<b>2.392,5</b>

2. Students' scores classification

**Tabel 2. Students' scores classification**

Classification	Score	Frequence		Percent	
		Pre-test	Post-test	Pre-test	Post-test
<b>Impressive</b>	90-100	-	3	-	10%
<b>Very Good</b>	80-89	-	13	-	43,33%
<b>Good</b>	70-79	1	14	3,3%	46,67%
<b>Poor</b>	60-69	21	-	70%	-
<b>Very Poor</b>	< 60	8	-	26,67%	-

3. T-test

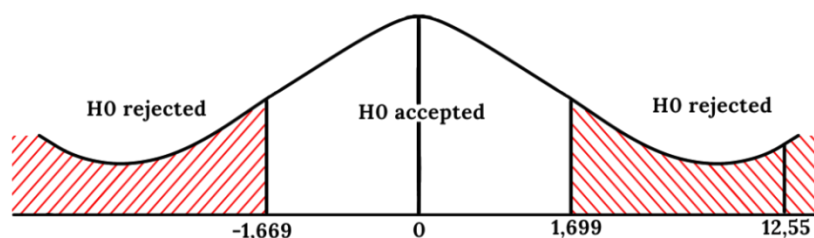
The average and deviation standard were computed before the t-test. The results of these calculations are presented below:

**Tabel 3. The average and standard deviation results**

Result	Pre-test	Post-test
<b>Average</b>	61,17	79,75

<b>Standard deviation</b>	6,62	6,71
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The analysis revealed that the average pre-test score (61.17) was lower than the post-test average (79.75). The standard deviation score on the post-test phase (6.71) was marginally greater than the score recorded during the pre-test phase (6.62), indicating that there was a change or improvement after the treatments were conducted. The researcher then calculates the average difference, resulting in 18.5. A t-test was performed to determine whether the intervention had a statistically meaningful effect. The test produces a t-test of 12.55. To interpret this result, the researcher referred to the t-distribution table with a significance threshold of 0.05 and 29 degrees of freedom. Hence, the resulting t-value was (12.55), which exceeded the threshold value of 1.699. Due to the statistically significant outcome, the null hypothesis was dismissed in favor of the alternative hypothesis.



**Figure 1. Hypothesis Testing**

The hypothesis test yielded results that warranted the rejection of  $H_0$  and the acceptance of  $H_a$ , indicating that the difference was statistically meaningful. The analysis substantiates that “Let’s Read” intervention contributed meaningfully to the enhancement of students’ narrative text comprehension. Furthermore, to determine the magnitude of this effect, an effect size calculation was performed. The result, an effect size of 2.174, surpasses the conventional threshold of 0,5, signifying a strong practical impact. These findings suggest that “Let’s Read” is an effective instructional media for enhancing students’ comprehension of narrative texts, and its integration into the learning process can be considered both statistically and educationally meaningful.

## CONCLUSION

This research investigated how effective Let’s Read functions as a digital platform aimed at enhancing students’ narrative text comprehension. To assess how effective Let’s Read is in improving narrative text comprehension, tests were administered before and after three phases of treatment. Referring to the findings, students’ post-test score average was 79,75, greater than the pre-test score average, 61,17. Afterwards, the value of the t-test was 12,55, whereas the t-table was 1.699 with a significance level threshold of 0.05 and 29 degrees of freedom. An effect size of 2.174 was found, which falls within the strong effect category (greater than 0.05). It is indicated that the Let’s Read application exerts a strong influence on students’ narrative text comprehension. In addition, Let’s Read implementation motivated students and made them more active in learning. Students also expressed that Let’s Read was interesting and supported them in understanding the material easily. Therefore, besides helping students to comprehend

narrative text, Let's Read also becomes an alternative media for teachers to catch students' attention and make them more active in the class. This research only discovered the effectiveness of Let's Read reading media in comprehending narrative text. It is suggested that another researcher conduct other research using Let's Read on other language skills. In summary, Let's Read as an alternative media successfully improved students' reading comprehension of narrative texts and encouraged greater student engagement in the classroom.

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