

THE POWER OF DIGITAL STORYTELLING IN ENGAGING AND MOTIVATING YOUNG LEARNERS TO LEARN ENGLISH

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ABSTRACT

The development of digital technology in education offers opportunities to create more engaging and meaningful English learning for early childhood. One approach that has gained attention is digital storytelling, which integrates visual, audio, animation, and contextual narrative elements. Despite its growing use, comprehensive studies examining its role in enhancing engagement and motivation among young learners remain limited. Therefore, this study aims to systematically examine how digital storytelling enhances student engagement and motivation in English learning. This research employed a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) following the PRISMA framework. Articles published between 2020 and 2025 were collected through Publish or Perish as the primary source, supported by Google Scholar, Connected Papers, and Semantic Scholar. Based on predetermined inclusion and exclusion criteria, 12 articles were selected and analyzed using thematic analysis. The findings reveal that digital storytelling enhances engagement across behavioral, cognitive, and emotional dimensions. Students become more active in language activities, demonstrate deeper understanding, and show greater enthusiasm during learning. It also strengthens intrinsic motivation by presenting contextual and relatable stories that foster enjoyment, confidence, and a sense of ownership. Student involvement in creating digital stories further promotes creativity, critical thinking, collaboration, and responsibility. Therefore, digital storytelling is a flexible and sustainable strategy for improving engagement and intrinsic motivation in young learners' English learning.

Keywords: *Digital storytelling, engagement, English learning, motivation, young learners.*

INTRODUCTION

Amidst the rapid pace of globalization and technological development, English language skills have become one of the most important skills needed to face future challenges. English not only serves as a tool for international communication but also as a means of accessing information, knowledge, and technological developments at a global level (Andika, 2025; Indrayani et al., 2025). Therefore, introducing English from an early age is a strategic step in equipping children with sustainable language skills (Artini, 2017; Budasi et al., 2020; Dewi, 2023). At an early age, children are in a period of rapid cognitive development, where the brain is still flexible and responsive to learning new languages (Budiati et al., 2021). This condition makes it easier for children to absorb language naturally through meaningful learning experiences (Batu, 2024). Early exposure to English also helps shape positive learning attitudes and reduce anxiety toward using a new language, which is crucial for long-term language development (Stolvoort et al., 2024). Thus, English learning at an early age needs to be

designed appropriately, in accordance with their characteristics and needs, in order to foster interest, confidence, and strong learning motivation as a basis for language learning at the next stage.

As young learners, children have learning characteristics that differ significantly from those of adult learners (Ziyatjanovna, 2025). They tend to learn language more effectively through concrete and visual experiences, as well as activities that involve emotions and imagination (Elvisa, 2024). In addition, they have a relatively short attention span, so they get bored easily (Nitiasih et al., 2020; Ratminingsih & Budasi, 2018; Suwastini et al., 2022). Furthermore, they have a high level of curiosity and a tendency to learn through play, listening to stories, and interacting directly with their surroundings (Juhana, 2014; Parker et al., 2022; Rahiem, 2021; Suardi et al., 2021). Unfortunately, these characteristics are often not fully accommodated in practices in many schools, as learning instruction is still dominated by conventional approaches that emphasize separate mastery of vocabulary and language structures (Celik et al., 2021; Loewen et al., 2020). In such contexts, students are often asked to memorize words or follow instructions passively without meaningful active involvement. Moreover, the use of attractive and innovative media, which could capture their attention, is still limited (Ratminingsih, 2018). As a result, the learning feels abstract and less relevant to the real world, which makes them easily bored, lose interest, and lack motivation (Athiyaturrahmah et al., 2023). It highlights the need to pay greater attention to how students are actively engaged and motivated during the learning process.

Student engagement and motivation are important factors that determine the success of language learning (Aryaningsih et al., 2025; Ebadi et al., 2024; Kusuma et al., 2021). Student engagement refers to the level of active involvement of students in the learning process, which includes behavioral, emotional, and cognitive aspects, such as participation in learning activities, interest and enjoyment during learning, and willingness to think and understand the material meaningfully (Alamsyah et al., 2025). Meanwhile, student motivation refers to internal and external drives that influence students' willingness to initiate, maintain, and direct their learning activities towards achieving learning objectives (Bandhu et al., 2024; Nurcahayani et al., 2025). In the context of English language learning for young learners, these two concepts influence each other because high engagement in learning activities can increase motivation, and strong motivation encourages students to be more actively involved in learning (Zhang et al., 2025). Children tend to show higher engagement and motivation when learning is designed to be fun, relevant to their experiences, and provides space for exploration and interaction (Collie & Martin, 2019). Therefore, English learning for young learners needs to pay attention not only to cognitive aspects, but also to the emotional and motivational involvement of students so that the learning process can take place optimally.

In response to this need, the advancement of digital technology offers new opportunities to design English learning that is more aligned with their characteristics (Fentari, 2025). The integration of technology allows teachers to present material in a more varied, interesting, and contextual way (Haleem et al., 2022). It is also capable of attracting students' attention and maintaining their focus on learning for longer periods of time (Mansyur & Aminah, 2024). With a more interactive learning experience, students are not only recipients of information but also actively involved in the learning process (Sipahutar & Harahap, 2025). One form of digital technology that is relevant to English learning is digital storytelling (Tatlı et al., 2022). It is the activity of telling stories through digital media that combines text, images, animation, sound, and music into a single narrative (Robin, 2016; Susila et al., 2024). Through this medium, English is not presented as a collection of separate words or grammar rules, but as part of a story that is alive and close to the children's experiences (Yu & Wang, 2025). Stories act as a bridge that connects language with emotions, imagination, and student learning experiences

(Brunetti et al., 2024). It makes digital storytelling a potential approach to increase engagement, motivation, and English comprehension in young learners.

Previous studies have shown that digital storytelling has great potential in enhancing engagement and motivation in learning English among young learners. The presentation of stories that are rich in visuals and audio is able to attract students' attention, maintain their focus on learning, and create a more enjoyable classroom atmosphere (Asnas, 2024). In addition, learning through stories is considered to be able to reduce students' anxiety in using English, because the language is learned indirectly through narratives and relatable characters (Mawaddah et al., 2025; Muthmainnah et al., 2025). The emotional engagement built through stories also encourages them to be more courageous in exploring the language, whether in writing, listening, speaking, reading, or responding to stories, and supports comprehensive vocabulary and language skills mastery (Akdoğan, 2023; Alemi et al., 2022; Hidayat et al., 2024; Khasanah et al., 2023; Rahmani et al., 2023). Thus, digital storytelling not only supports the cognitive aspects of language learning but also the affective aspects that are very important for young learners. Despite its widely recognized potential, many studies on digital storytelling in English learning still focus mainly on specific language skills, without examining in depth how it affects student engagement and motivation in learning as a whole.

Based on the above description, it can be concluded that there is still a research gap related to comprehensive studies on the role of digital storytelling in increasing student engagement and motivation in English learning, especially for young learners. Therefore, it is important to conduct a systematic review of the latest research in order to gain a deeper understanding of the effectiveness of digital storytelling as a medium for English language learning. Thus, this study aims to review and analyze the results of previous studies on the use of digital storytelling in enhancing the engagement and motivation of young learners in English learning. Through a synthesis of research findings from 2020 to 2025, this study is expected to provide a comprehensive overview of the strengths of digital storytelling as a learning medium and answer the following research question: 1) How can the use of digital storytelling enhance student engagement and motivation in English learning?

METHOD

This study employed a Systematic Literature Review to examine the role of digital storytelling in enhancing young learners' engagement and motivation in English learning. It is a method that is conducted systematically, transparently, and replicably to identify, evaluate, and comprehensively interpret research results relevant to specific research questions (Carrera-Rivera et al., 2022). It was chosen because it provides an in-depth, evidence-based understanding of the power of digital storytelling in increasing the engagement and motivation of young learners in English learning. To ensure transparency and replicability, the review process followed the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) framework published by (Page et al., 2021).

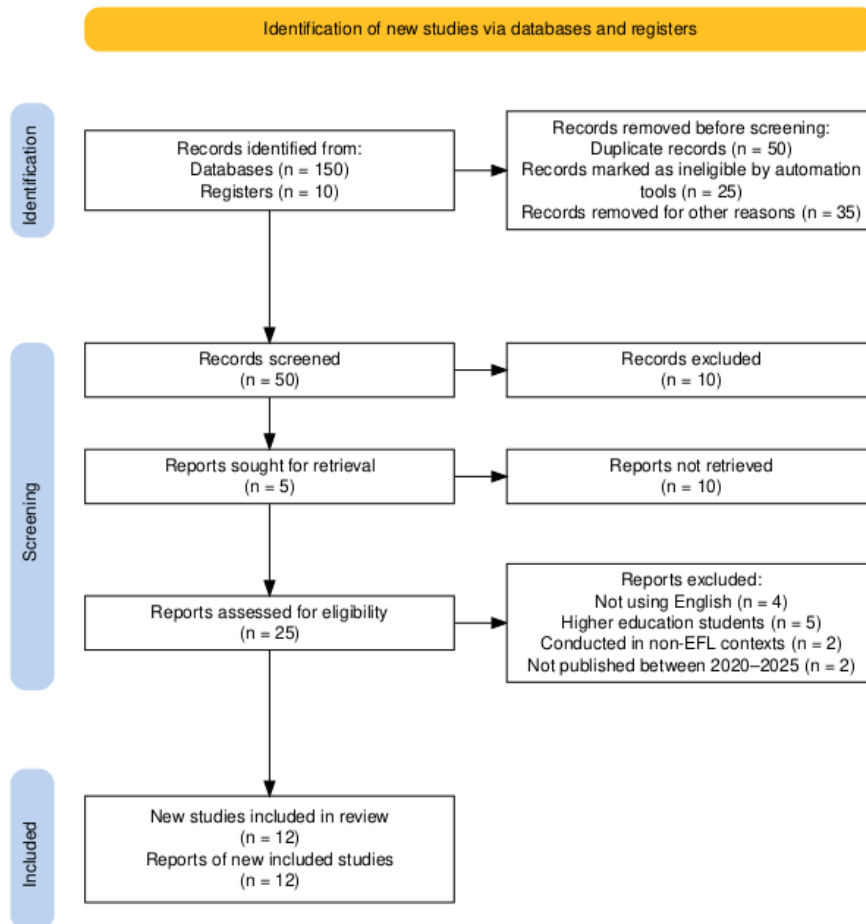


Figure 1. PRISMA Flow Diagram

Data Collection Methods and Instruments

The research instruments used in this study were scientific journal articles obtained from various academic search platforms. Publish or Perish was used as the main database source, while Google Scholar, Connected Papers, and Semantic Scholar were used as supporting sources to expand the scope of the literature search. They were selected based on their ability to provide broad access to reputable scientific publications in the fields of education, English language learning, and learning technology. This study also used data extraction sheets as a supporting instrument. These sheets served to record and organize important information from each selected article, including the author's name, year of publication, research design, and key findings related to student engagement and learning motivation. It was used to help ensure that the data collection and analysis processes were carried out systematically and consistently.

Data Collection Procedures

The data collection procedure was carried out in stages by following the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) protocol to ensure transparency and quality of the review process. The first stage was identification, which involved searching for articles through the Publish or Perish, Google Scholar, Connected Papers, and Semantic Scholar platforms using a combination of keywords arranged using Boolean operators, including “digital storytelling,” “young learners,” “English language learning,” “engagement,” and “motivation.” The literature search was limited to articles published between 2020 and 2025 to ensure the recency of the research. The next stage was screening by reviewing the titles

and abstracts of the articles to assess their suitability for the research focus. Relevant articles were then proceeded to the full-text review stage based on predetermined inclusion and exclusion criteria. Inclusion criteria include studies that discuss the use of digital storytelling in English learning to increase student engagement and motivation, using scientific approaches such as qualitative, quantitative, mixed methods, or classroom action research, conducted in the context of ELT/EFL with early learners or elementary school students as subjects, and written in English and published within the specified time frame. In contrast, studies that do not involve digital storytelling, do not focus on engagement and motivation, use adult learners as subjects, are conducted outside the ELT/EFL context, were published before 2020, or are written in languages other than English are excluded from this review.

Data Analysis Methods

Articles that met all selection criteria were then analyzed using thematic analysis. This technique was chosen because it allowed researchers to identify key themes, patterns of findings, and trends in research results related to the use of digital storytelling in increasing engagement and learning motivation among young learners. The analysis process was carried out in several stages, namely: (1) reading and understanding each article thoroughly, (2) coding important information related to the learning context, digital storytelling strategies, forms of student engagement, and aspects of learning motivation, (3) grouping these codes into main themes, and (4) synthesizing findings from various studies to answer the research questions comprehensively. The results of the analysis were presented in a summary table containing the characteristics of the research and main findings, as well as a narrative description explaining how digital storytelling contributes to creating English learning that is more interesting, meaningful, and motivating for young learners. With this approach, the research focuses on synthesizing existing findings and does not produce conclusions beyond the empirical evidence from previous studies.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the results of selection and systematic review of relevant articles, researchers identified twelve articles that specifically discuss the application of digital storytelling in English language learning and its relationship to increasing student engagement and motivation. The articles selected and presented in a table met the inclusion criteria because they explicitly examined the use of digital storytelling as a learning medium or strategy, both in the context of early childhood education and elementary school, and highlighted its impact on student motivation and engagement. Meanwhile, other articles that did not meet the inclusion criteria were eliminated because they only discussed the use of technology in general without a clear focus on digital storytelling or did not emphasize the aspects of engagement and motivation in English language learning. The synthesis of the twelve reviewed articles shows that the application of digital storytelling has a significant effect on increasing student motivation and engagement in English language learning. All of the studies analyzed reported positive findings, with students showing higher interest in learning, active engagement in learning activities, and a more enthusiastic attitude toward English language material after the application of digital storytelling. This medium is considered capable of providing a more interesting and enjoyable learning experience through a combination of visual, audio, and contextual narrative elements, so that students do not easily get bored and are more focused during the learning process. These findings indicate that digital storytelling is an effective learning approach in increasing student learning motivation, especially for early learners and elementary school students.

Furthermore, the review results also show that the increase in learning motivation generated by digital storytelling has the potential to have a positive impact on students' overall learning performance. Several studies report that increased student motivation and engagement are accompanied by improvements in English language skills, such as vocabulary mastery, speaking and writing skills, and language literacy. This shows that digital storytelling not only serves as an engaging learning medium but also as a tool that supports a more effective and meaningful learning process. With increased intrinsic motivation, students become more active in learning activities, dare to express their ideas, and show greater confidence in using English. In terms of research context, the reviewed articles came from various countries, both in Indonesia and abroad, such as Turkey and Greece. This diversity of context shows that digital storytelling is a relevant learning approach that can be widely applied in various cultural backgrounds and education systems. However, most of the studies in this review focus on the application of digital storytelling in early childhood and elementary education, which confirms that this approach is very suitable for the learning characteristics of young learners who need visual, emotional, and interactive stimulation in the language learning process. Overall, the findings from the twelve articles analyzed confirm that digital storytelling makes a significant contribution to increasing engagement and motivation in learning English among students. The application of digital storytelling has been proven to create a more interactive, participatory, and enjoyable learning atmosphere, thereby encouraging students to actively engage in the learning process. Thus, digital storytelling can be seen as a potential and effective learning strategy to improve the quality of English language learning, especially for young learners.

Table 1. An overview of the twelve reviewed studies

No	Author and Years	Title	Method	Findings
1	Kurniawan (2021)	Digital Storytelling: Teachers' Guide to Attract Children's Interest and Motivation in Kindergarten's English Language Learning	Descriptive qualitative	Digital storytelling is able to attract the attention of young children in following stories and English learning materials. The integration of stories and digital technology makes the learning process more interesting, thereby increasing children's engagement during learning activities. Children's motivation to learn also appears to increase, as they are more enthusiastic and interested in following the learning process compared to the use of conventional storytelling methods.
2	Mustafa et al. (2024)	The Influence of Digital Storytelling on Early Childhood Literacy Development	Mixed method	Digital storytelling is an effective approach to increasing the engagement and motivation of young children in literacy activities. The interactive nature of the media encourages children to actively participate in reading, writing, and understanding stories, making the learning process more interesting and enjoyable. It also plays a role in fostering children's interest and love of reading from an early age.
3	Pratiwi et al. (2025)	Enhancing Pre-School Students' Vocabulary Skills Through Digital Storytelling	Classroom action research	Digital storytelling effectively increases the engagement and motivation of early childhood learners. During the learning process, children showed higher levels of attention, enthusiasm, and interaction compared to before the implementation of the media. It also supports vocabulary retention and creates a more enjoyable learning atmosphere, even when implemented with simple technology. It confirms that the media is an effective and engaging learning method to increase student motivation and engagement in early childhood education.

No	Author and Years	Title	Method	Findings
4	Kodriyah et al. (2025)	The Implementation of Digital Storytelling Applications to Improve Elementary Students' English-Speaking Skills	Classroom action research	Digital storytelling significantly increases student motivation and engagement in learning. The interactive features of the media encourage students to participate actively and creatively in storytelling activities, making them more confident in expressing their ideas. In addition to improving speaking skills, the learning process also becomes more enjoyable and meaningful, which ultimately strengthens student engagement in every English learning activity.
5	Setiyorini(2020)	The effect of Using Digital Storytelling on Students' Intrinsic Motivation for Learning Vocabulary	Descriptive case study	Digital storytelling has a positive effect on students' intrinsic motivation in learning English vocabulary in elementary school. There is a significant difference between the level of students' intrinsic motivation before and after the application of digital storytelling. After learning using the media, students show higher motivation and more active involvement in vocabulary learning activities.
6	Alemi et al. (2022)	The Role of Digital Storytelling in EFL Students' Writing Skill and Motivation	Mixed method	Digital Storytelling has a positive impact on student motivation and engagement in English writing. Through digital storytelling activities, students not only practice their writing skills but also actively participate in the learning process, from developing ideas and composing texts to packaging stories in digital form. DST can increase student motivation because they feel more interested, confident, and enthusiastic in expressing their ideas through writing.
7	Elvisa (2024)	Engaging Students' Literacy Participation Using Audio-Visual Storytelling	Descriptive qualitative research	Audio-visual storytelling is effective in increasing student engagement in literacy activities in the classroom, where almost all students are actively involved in literacy activities. These findings indicate that audio-visual storytelling not only develops students' language skills but also reduces student boredom, increases learning motivation, and encourages active participation in English literacy learning.
8	Kurniawan & Wijayaningsih (2025)	Bilingual Digital storytelling as a method to enhance childrens' English language skills	Classroom action research	Bilingual Digital Storytelling effectively increases children's engagement and attention span in English learning. It becomes more enjoyable and participatory, so that children are more actively involved in learning activities. BDS also has a positive impact on improving children's English vocabulary and morphological awareness. It confirms that BDS is an interactive learning method that can significantly support the motivation and engagement of early childhood learning.
9	Putri et al. (2025)	Implementation of Technology-Based Learning Strategies through Digital Storytelling Applications of Elementary School Students	Quantitative experimental design	Digital storytelling has a positive impact on student motivation and engagement in learning. Students in the experimental group showed higher interest in learning and more active engagement in reading activities compared to students who were taught using the lecture method. It indicates that the media can increase student motivation to learn through interactive and visually appealing material presentation.
10	Aldbashi (2021)	Attitudes of Primary School Students in the UAE Towards Using Digital Story-Telling as	descriptive analytical approach	Digital storytelling can increase students' concentration, memory, and motivation to learn, because the material is presented in an interesting way through a combination of visuals, audio, and meaningful narratives, so that students are more actively involved in the learning process.

No	Author and Years	Title	Method	Findings
		a Learning Method in Classroom		
11	Sunar et al. (2023)	Using digital stories during COVID-19 to enhance early-grade learners' language skills	Classroom action research	Digital storytelling can be a very effective strategy for encouraging conversation and interaction in the classroom, which ultimately helps students master the language. By engaging students in meaningful dialogue and discussion, they have the opportunity to practice actively, thereby significantly improving their English speaking and listening skills.
12	Nuroh et al. (2021)	Engaging young learners of English with multilingual digital storytelling (MDST) during covid-19 school closure	Participatory action research	Digital storytelling can increase student motivation and engagement because, in the process, they are not merely recipients of material. Students play an active role as creators of stories, involved in various meaningful activities, such as taking photos, writing scripts, discussing, revising stories, and presenting the results of their digital storytelling.

Digital storytelling presents learning that is more interesting than conventional approaches because it integrates multimodal elements such as visuals, audio, animation, and contextual storytelling. The combination of these elements is able to attract students' attention from the start of learning and maintain their focus for a longer period of time. Various studies, such as those conducted by Kurniawan (2021), Setiyorini (2020), and Alderbashi (2021) showed that students who learn using digital storytelling demonstrate higher levels of concentration, active engagement in learning activities, and increased interest in English language material. These findings indicate that digital storytelling can create a more immersive and enjoyable learning experience, which is the main foundation for increasing student engagement and motivation. Furthermore, the increase in engagement generated through digital storytelling encompasses three main dimensions, namely behavioral, cognitive, and emotional engagement. Behaviorally, students become more actively involved in various learning activities, such as reading, speaking, writing, and storytelling, as reported by Pratiwi et al. (2025), Kodriyah et al. (2025) and Putri et al. (2025). From a cognitive perspective, students show better focus and deeper mental engagement in understanding the content of stories and language material. Meanwhile, emotionally, students feel happier, more enthusiastic, and more interested in the learning process, so that learning is no longer perceived as a boring activity. Elvira (2024) also emphasized that the use of audio-visual-based storytelling can reduce student boredom and create a more lively and participatory classroom atmosphere. Thus, digital storytelling not only increases student engagement superficially but also builds deeper and more sustainable engagement.

From a learning motivation perspective, digital storytelling plays an important role in increasing students' intrinsic motivation. When learning is presented in the form of stories that are interesting and relevant to the world of children, students tend to enjoy the learning process more and are motivated to actively participate without external coercion. Setiyorini's (2020) showed that elementary school students have higher vocabulary learning motivation after the application of digital storytelling, as reflected in increased participation and interest in learning. Similar findings were also reported by Alemi et al. (2022) and Nuroh et al. (2021), who found that student involvement in the process of creating digital stories increased their confidence, enthusiasm, and desire to express ideas in English. This involvement provides a sense of ownership of learning, so that students are motivated to learn not only because of academic demands, but because they find the process interesting and enjoyable. Therefore, digital

storytelling can be seen as an effective approach in fostering intrinsic and sustainable learning motivation.

However, the effectiveness of digital storytelling in increasing student engagement and motivation is inseparable from its main characteristics and features. One of the most prominent key factors is the multimodal and interactive nature of digital storytelling. The use of attractive visuals, supporting audio, and structured storytelling allows students to learn through multiple sensory channels simultaneously. Studies by Mustafa et al. (2024) and Kurniawan & Wijayaningsih (2025) emphasize that digitally designed storytelling that is visual and contextual can extend children's attention span and increase their interest in learning English. This interactivity provides opportunities for students to be actively involved in learning, so that they are not just passive listeners but also participants who are directly involved in the learning process. Another important factor is student involvement as active subjects in learning, especially when they are involved as creators of digital stories. Research by Nuroh et al. (2021) and Alemi et al. (2022) showed that the process of creating digital storytelling, from designing the storyline, writing the script, selecting images and audio, to presenting the final product, provides a meaningful learning experience and empowers students. This process encourages students to think critically, be creative, and collaborate with their peers, thereby significantly increasing their engagement and motivation to learn.

Furthermore, the active role of students in learning also fosters a sense of responsibility and self-confidence, which are important components of learning motivation. In addition to technical and pedagogical aspects, the suitability of digital storytelling to the learning characteristics of young learners is also a key factor in its success. Children tend to learn more effectively through concrete, visual, and emotional experiences, and have a relatively short attention span. Digital storytelling is able to address these needs by presenting learning materials in the form of interesting and easy-to-understand stories. Elvisa's (2024) findings show that audio-visual-based storytelling can reduce boredom and increase student participation in literacy activities. Even in conditions of technological limitations, as reported by Pratiwi et al. (2025) digital storytelling remains effective in increasing student engagement, which shows that the main strength of this approach lies in the quality of the narrative and learning experience presented, not solely in the sophistication of the technology used. Thus, digital storytelling is flexible and adaptive, so it can be applied in various contexts of English language learning for young learners.

In addition to the various benefits gained, the implementation of digital storytelling in teaching practices also presents a number of significant challenges for teachers, including pre-service English teachers, as found in the research by Ermawati et al. (2025). One of the main challenges lies in the limited technical skills in operating various video editing and animation applications. Not all teachers have sufficient background or experience in using multimedia software, so the process of producing digital stories often requires more time and effort. In addition to technical aspects, pedagogical challenges are also an important concern. Teachers are not only required to produce visually appealing products, but must also ensure that they are appropriate for the learning objectives and competencies to be achieved. Another challenge relates to time management and workload. The process of planning, scriptwriting, collecting materials such as images, music, and sound effects, and editing requires a relatively long time. In the context of teaching practices with limited schedules, teachers must divide their attention between preparing materials, managing learning, and producing digital storytelling, which often creates additional pressure, especially for teachers who are not accustomed to managing technology-based learning projects. In terms of resources, limited facilities and access to technology are also challenges that cannot be ignored, given that not all schools have adequate supporting equipment. This shows that the successful implementation of digital storytelling

depends not only on individual competence but also on adequate infrastructure and learning environment support.

From the students' perspective, the challenges that arise are no less important. Asnas (2024) explained that when students use digital storytelling to learn English, they often face two main obstacles, namely technical problems and difficulty understanding vocabulary. Technical problems experienced by students include unclear sound, music that is too loud, or text that is difficult to read. These minor issues can distract students' concentration while learning. Although they actually like video or digital story media, technical glitches make it difficult for them to follow the story well. This finding is in line with Tatlı et al. (2022), who stated that technical problems in digital storytelling can increase students' cognitive load and make it more difficult for them to understand the material. In addition to technical problems, students also had difficulty understanding vocabulary that was considered too difficult. When the story used many new words or complex terms, some students felt disappointed and lost their enthusiasm for learning. They become less focused and sometimes choose not to continue understanding the story. Asnas et al. (2023) explained that EFL students often have difficulty translating and understanding complex vocabulary when using audio-visual media. Maya et al. (2022) also found that students often experience difficulties in pronouncing, writing, and understanding the meaning of English vocabulary when learning through digital storytelling. Thus, although digital storytelling has great potential in increasing engagement and learning motivation, both teachers and students still face various challenges in its application. Therefore, careful planning, the development of media that is appropriate to the students' ability level, and adequate facility support are important factors in ensuring that digital storytelling can be used optimally in English language learning.

In line with these findings, the writer emphasizes that digital storytelling does not merely serve as a supporting medium for learning but rather as a pedagogical approach that can integrate and build student motivation and engagement in English language learning. Student engagement is understood as a comprehensive process, covering interrelated behavioral, cognitive, and emotional aspects. Through the presentation of interesting, contextual, and multimodal stories, digital storytelling allows these three aspects to develop simultaneously. Students are not only physically active in participating in learning activities, but are also encouraged to think more deeply in understanding the meaning of language and connect emotionally with the storyline presented. It is this emotional engagement that then triggers the growth of intrinsic motivation, as students feel that learning English is an enjoyable and meaningful experience. In the context of learning English as a foreign language, motivation is greatly influenced by the meaningfulness of the learning experience. Language cannot be mastered optimally through mechanical practice or vocabulary memorization alone, but rather through learning experiences that are contextual, communicative, and relevant to students' lives. The learning media present a more authentic exposure to language, allowing students to understand the function of language as a tool for conveying stories, ideas, and real experiences. When students realize that English has a real role in everyday life, they tend to view learning as something relevant and valuable. Thus, when designed appropriately and tailored to student characteristics, digital storytelling becomes an effective approach in building deeper and more sustainable motivation and engagement.

However, the writer also acknowledges that the implementation of digital storytelling is not without challenges, both for teachers and students. Therefore, the success of this approach depends heavily on the right strategy and careful planning. To overcome the limitations of teachers' technical skills, the author recommends ongoing training that focuses on the use of simple and easy-to-operate applications, so that technology does not become a major obstacle. Collaboration between teachers and the division of production stages from story planning,

script writing, material collection, to editing is also seen as an effective solution to reduce workload and increase time efficiency. From a pedagogical perspective, the alignment between story content, learning objectives, and students' language proficiency levels is crucial to ensure that the material remains relevant and not too complex. Meanwhile, to help students overcome difficulties in understanding vocabulary and following the storyline, teachers are advised to introduce key vocabulary before playing the story, use simple and contextual language, ensure clear audio-visual quality, and provide follow-up activities to reinforce understanding. With a structured approach, adequate facilities, and adjustments to students' needs and characteristics, these challenges can be minimized so that digital storytelling can continue to function optimally in increasing students' motivation and engagement in English language learning.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings and discussion, it can be concluded that digital storytelling is an effective learning approach in increasing student engagement and motivation in English language learning, especially among early childhood and elementary school students. The literature review consistently shows that the use of digital storytelling has a positive impact on the learning experience of students by creating a more interesting, interactive, and enjoyable learning atmosphere. The research findings showed that digital storytelling can increase student engagement in three main aspects, namely behavioral, cognitive, and emotional engagement. Behaviorally, students become more active in participating in learning activities such as reading, speaking, writing, and storytelling. Cognitively, students show better focus and understanding of English material because the material is presented contextually through a meaningful storyline. Meanwhile, emotionally, students feel more enthusiastic, happy, and interested in participating in the learning process, so that English learning is no longer considered boring. Furthermore, digital storytelling has also been proven to play an important role in increasing learning motivation, especially intrinsic motivation. When learning is packaged in the form of digital stories that are interesting and relevant to the world of children, students are encouraged to learn actively without external coercion. Student involvement as active participants, even as creators of digital stories, gives them a sense of ownership of the learning process, increases their confidence, and encourages them to be more courageous in expressing their ideas and using English.

In addition to providing significant benefits, the implementation of digital storytelling also presents various challenges, both for teachers and students. Teachers often face technical obstacles, time constraints, and demands to align media with learning objectives. Meanwhile, students may experience technical difficulties or have trouble understanding overly complex vocabulary. However, these challenges are not insurmountable obstacles. Through continuous training, systematic planning, selection of simple applications, simplification of language, provision of scaffolding, and adequate facility support, these obstacles can be minimized. Thus, the success of digital storytelling does not only lie in the sophistication of the technology used, but also in the quality of planning, suitability to student characteristics, and the pedagogical strategies applied. If designed and implemented appropriately, digital storytelling has great potential to create more lively, contextual, and sustainable English language learning, while also building student motivation and engagement more deeply. Overall, the synthesis of the twelve articles analyzed confirms that digital storytelling not only functions as an engaging learning medium but also as an effective learning strategy in supporting the development of English language skills, such as vocabulary, speaking, writing, and literacy. Its suitability to the learning characteristics of children, who need visual, emotional, and participatory stimulation, makes digital storytelling a relevant, flexible, and highly promising learning

approach to be applied sustainably in English language learning at the early childhood and elementary school levels.

Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that English teachers in early childhood education and elementary schools integrate digital storytelling as a learning strategy to increase student engagement and motivation. Teachers need to design or select digital stories that are appropriate for the characteristics and needs of students, and actively involve students not only as listeners, but also as participants or creators of digital stories. In addition, schools are expected to support the implementation of digital storytelling by providing adequate technological facilities and training for teachers. For future researchers, it is recommended to further examine the effectiveness of digital storytelling in improving students' English language skills and character development, as well as to explore its application in different contexts, levels, and school conditions in order to strengthen the findings and expand the contribution of research in the field of English language learning.

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