

THE USE OF DIGITAL BOOK *LET'S READ* IN CLASSROOM READING ACTIVITY FOR JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT

Diana Putri^{1)*}, Wiwiet Eva Savitri²⁾

^{1,2)}Jurusan Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris, Universitas Negeri Surabaya
diana.18016@mhs.unesa.ac.id

ABSTRACT

Reading is an important skill for all students. It is the action of extracting meaning (the message) but in the case of language acquisition, language aspects (pronunciation, structure, spelling, and vocabulary) are also included. The purpose of this research was to find out the process reading activity using digital book *Let's Read* in classroom. Using digital book as text books in schools is a revolutionary technology, particularly in developing countries. The digital book provides students, teachers, and schools with an additional educational tool or instrument that can assist or improve the learning process. The participants of this research were 34 students of 8H in Junior High School of 1 Beji. The data were obtained from students and teachers through observation, questionnaire, and interview. Observation is done by observing directly the reading learning process using *lets read* in the classroom. The questionnaire is distributed online through WhatsApp Group which contains of 10 questions related to the student's response on *Let's Read*. The researcher also conducted interview with English teachers to find out their opinion about *Let's Read* which was used as teaching material for reading activity in the classroom. The findings of this study demonstrated that teachers can help learners because students actively tried to follow teacher guidance during the reading activity by *Let's Read*. During the learning process facilitated by *Let's Read*, students could pique their reading ability by selecting books on their own. Students also give good responses during the process of reading learning using *Let's Read* as a student reading activity media.

Keywords: Digital Book, Reading Activity, *Let's Read*

INTRODUCTION

Reading habit is extremely crucial for learners. It might encourage students to write down their thoughts and opinions. To develop reading habits, we should first improve the reading capabilities that are born with us. Reading habit is such a great behavior since it expresses people's minds in many kinds of reading (Danaei, Jamali, Mansouria, & Rastegarpour, 2020). Reading can be done with printed books but nowadays people use digital books to read. This situation, along with the unavoidable benefits of children reading print books, requires an examination of the benefits and limitations of children's digital books (Kucirkova, 2019).

All readers must be able to understand what they are reading. It is an active process of connecting current information and experiences with new information gained from the text to generate meaning (Grimshaw, Dungworth, McKnight, & Morris, 2007). Improving children' reading comprehension and inference from academic and non-academic information is an essential requirement for preparing them for good ambition and action. As a result, educators and instructors are always attempting to test and increase students' reading comprehension. Reading comprehension is an internal, and so unseen, activity, and academics are studying its aspects and various techniques to improving it (Mulyaningtyas & Setyawan, 2021). According to a research, four important components of reading are word level process, prior knowledge, motivation and attitude, and reading skills. Each component may be strengthened in a variety of ways (Engel, 2014a). Adding

pictures and animations to the text, for example, can assist with word acquisition, and employing technologies can enhance with reading interest.

Despite its significance, reading is one of the most difficult subjects in the classroom setting. The growing need for high levels of educational attainment in our technology world worsened the situation (Furenes et al., 2021). Students' opinions toward the purposes for reading impact their ability to comprehend as well. Students must begin to interpret thoughtfully or creatively if they are to get through the information presented to them. The notion here is that when we comprehend text, we are trying to figure out what the aim is (Huang, Liang & Chen, 2012).

When people read, we come into contact with two levels of representation: one that we're seeing and one that we cannot see. As a result, the aim of this activity is to reveal and clarify the undetectable level, or intended meaning (Jeong, 2012). All readers should strive to comprehend what they read (Dr. Vladimir, 1967). According to research, competent readers regularly participate with the text and are aware of the mechanisms they utilize to comprehend what they read. Teachers can assist students increase their comprehension by teaching them reading methods. Research has demonstrated that predicting, finding connections, picturing, inferring, questioning, and summarizing are effective techniques for improving reading comprehension (Tomopoulos, Klass, & Mendelsohn, 2018). It is critical to teach the techniques by describing the approach and demonstrating how it should be utilized, modeling through the imagine approach, group practice, partnership practice, and individual application of the technique.

Reading comprehension is a type of story comprehension. There are various story comprehension requirements tests available, but two common techniques, retelling and recalling, are more popular among researchers (Cheng, & Tsai, 2016). *Let's Read* offers collections of graded book recommendations that may be accessed through any student's device under parents permission. To address the issue of book availability in Asia, The Asia Foundation's *Let's Read* program has developed and distributed digital books for children (Engel, 2014a). As a result of children's poor reading habits, the government is aiming to stimulate their interest in reading. The government calls it the School Literacy Movement, or Gerakan Literasi Sekolah (GLS). Because it aims to increase students' literacy abilities, the literacy movement is crucial in the country. Furthermore, schools must not only complete the 15-minute reading assignment each day, but also incorporate the learning experience into the classroom (Munzer, Miller, Weeks, Kaciroti, & Radesky, 2019).

Let's Read is a program which provides compilations of rated book recommendations that can be accessed via any student's mobile device while under parental guidance. To solve Asia's book shortages, The Asia Foundation's *Let's Read* program is developing and translating digital children's books. The collaboration of local authors, illustrators, and editors to create high-quality books in regional languages enhances the likelihood that Asian children will acquire enough, if not more, reading engagement through their gadgets (Ermerawati, 2019). The instructor can utilize any gadget in the classroom, such as a smartphone or the school's PC and projector. This program gives useful reading chances for children, especially those learning English as a second language, to measure their reading abilities and, more significantly, to examine the

stories, as local stories are provided in *Let's Read* collections (Christ, Wang, Chiu, & Cho, 2019). It is only one of numerous projects aimed at educating young readers about important problems like as equality, diversity, and the environment. Another social benefit of the Let's Read! activity is that both children and families may consider reading books in Let's Read!, for instance, children who enjoy reading seem to be more able to enjoy learning, succeed in school, and accomplish crucial objectives.

There have been relevant previous researchers who investigated about digital book and their research support this research paper. First, it is the article from (Engel, 2014) which the title is "*Engaging Extensive Reading Practice Mediated By Let's Read Asia In Online Classroom*". The purpose of this study is to discover the system of students' participation throughout extensive reading practice facilitated by *Let's Read*, as well as students' reaction during extensive reading practice at the eleventh grade in one of Karawang's Senior High Schools. The qualitative methodology and a basic explanatory research design were used in this study. Second, it is based on the research which conducted by (Syarifudin, 2020) which the title is "*Literacy Literature Learning With Let's Read Applications In The Pandemic Era*". The goal of this study is to discover how elementary school students can benefit from reading instruction using the *Let's Read*. *Let's Read* is a platform literary digital learning environment that can provide literary nuances that are more fascinating and in line with technological trends and knowledge.

So, based on the previous study above, the researcher wants find out the process reading activity using digital book *Let's Read* in classroom. Using digital book as text books in schools is a revolutionary technology, particularly in developing countries. The digital book provides students, teachers, and schools with an additional educational tool or instrument that can assist or improve the learning process.

In order to investigate the reading comprehension of the students' through the use of digital book *Let's Read*, it was considered the specific research questions as follows:

1. What features of Let's Read that can possibly be used in classroom reading activity?
2. How did the teacher use *Let's Read* to help in learning process of reading?
3. How did the students use *Let's Read* in practicing reading?
4. What the student's response on the use of *Let's Read*?

METHOD

The research was conducted at Junior High School of 1 Beji. The participants of this research were 34 students of 8H in Junior High School of 1 Beji. The data were obtained from students and teachers through observation, questionnaire, and interview. Observation is done by observing directly the reading learning process using lets read in the classroom. In this case, observation conducted by observing students by using observation checklist while teaching and learning reading practice through *Let's Read*. The observation indicators are the implementation of *Let's Read*, teacher's instruction, time limitation, reading frequency/repetition, assignment, discussion, feedback, and assessment. The questionnaire is distributed online through WhatsApp Group which contains of 10 questions related to the student's response on *Let's Read*. The researcher also conducted interview with English teachers to find out their opinion about *Let's Read* which was used

as teaching material for reading activity in the classroom. To support the observation data, online interview were conducted in this research. The data has been obtained will be arranged based on needs which will then be analyzed through the steps of data reduction, data display and data verification.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The Features of *Let's Read*

In this research, the researcher was used observation and students answer inquestionnaire to answer the first research question that was in what features does *Let's Read* which help students in learning English. Based on the findings data, the researcher found that there are four features that might help students reading comprehension, book level, theme, translation, and audio.

Let's Read is a digital books platform for children's tale literature. The Asia Foundation's Books for Asia built this program (Mulyaningtyas & Setyawan, 2021). *Let's Read* is a bookstore software developed by The Asia Foundation as part of the Books for Asia program. Based on the result from the questionnaire which identifies the use of *Let's Read* website, most of the students stated that it is easy to access that website. *Let's Read* as digital books can be accessed anywhere. The price is more affordable than printed books, even free (Jeong, 2012).

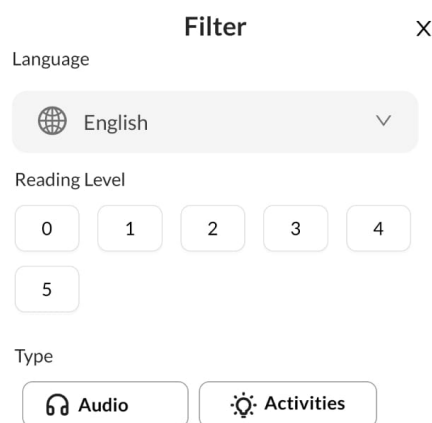


Figure 1. Book Levels in *Let's Read*

There are several features that *Let's Read* has to help students in increasing reading comprehension. This programme includes stories written in several languages (multilingual) and rated levels based on reading difficulties, beginning with my first book, level 1, level 2, level 3, level 4, and level 5. *Let's Read* program displays engaging images on each page. *Let's Read*, according to (Ermerawati, 2019), offers stories at several levels ranging from 1 to 5 and in a variety of languages. The story's material may be modified based on the level of reading difficulty; for example, students can begin reading at the beginning level, i.e. my first book or level 1. Students can progressively increase the difficulties of reading materials.

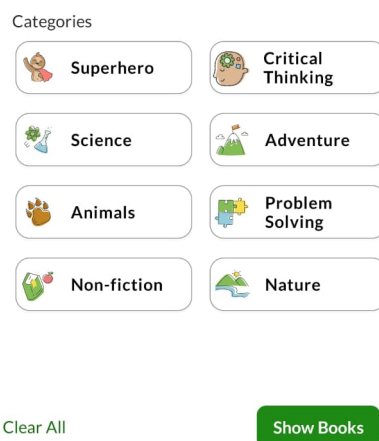


Figure 2. Book Categories in Let's Read

Some other option offered by *Let's Read* is the selecting of book themes. Heroes, critical thinking, science, adventure, animals, art and music, non-fiction problem solving, nature, amazing girls, health, comedy, folklore, community, and family and friendship are some of the reading categories available in the *Let's Read* program. This can undoubtedly improve children's enthusiasm to read about topics they are interested in. According to the questionnaire, some students thought the stories in *Let's Read* were easy to comprehend since they were written in simple and direct language. This is changed according to the complexity of the reading content. As a result, it facilitates students' comprehension of the story's content. Not only are the stories given diversified and contextualized to the child's environment, but they are also not simply fairy tales. In addition, there are attractive pictures/illustrations, and the text may be enhanced to clarify the story's substance and improve learners' enthusiasm for reading.

There were several book categories, and the students enjoyed reading using digital books, particularly *Let's Read*, because the book story contained illustrations. This is consistent with the goal of *Let's Read*, which is to cultivate a reading habit in Indonesian children at a young age by implementing digital illustrated stories, creating folk tales with cultural awareness, and interpreting quality children's story stories written at domestically and overseas into the primary language and native language. *Let's Read* promotes children's literacy in novel and creative methods.

Reading Level	Pages	Available Languages
2	18	20

Figure 3. Available Languages

Let's Read also provides a comparable feature to translation. This feature gives readers with a diverse variety of languages to choose from. For example, based on the given options, we may translate a single book title into numerous languages. This can make it simpler for readers to comprehend the reading based on the language they are

fluent in. *Let's Read* is also accessible in a variety of languages, including Indonesian and local dialects. This indirectly helps to preserve the mother tongue. According to Fitria (2020), *Let's Read* has multilingual functions. The stories in this program are packed in international, national, and regional languages to stimulate children's interest in reading.

The last feature is audio. In addition to learning to read, *Let's Read* also trains us to develop listening skills. This feature can make it easier for readers to know how to pronounce a word. This audio is a recording of a person or group of book readers reading the text of a book. This is beneficial for children since it stimulates their reading interest from a young age. If parents read their children's storybooks on occasion. Parents no longer need to take the time to read books for their children because the story books in *Let's Read* have an audio feature.

Besides the advantages of the *Let's Read* features above, unfortunately the feature of this program is not yet equipped with a quiz feature to test the level of students' understanding of the story books they have read.

***Let's Read* as a Material in Learning Process**

According to the results of the observation and interview *Let's Read* is considered as classroom learning material for learning English. It was discovered that there are several advantages to be acquired by applying *Let's Read* because of its numerous advantages. He stated that the content on the *Let's Read* website is excellent since there are so many books to read. He also stated that most students are still uninterested in reading, particularly scientific texts, because they are bored and the words used are challenging.

Based on the data in observation, the teacher asked students to access *Let's Read* through their mobile phone. The students are asked to read the text that has been selected by the teacher. The teacher also gives a time limitation for reading which is about 15 minutes. During those 15 minutes, it is known that the frequency of the number of words they read is different. In addition, the teacher also discusses the contents of the reading with all students. The teacher also gives assignments related to the story that they have read. the teacher prepares the task for the students because *Let's Read* doesn't have an assignment feature yet. Students are given 1 hour to answer 9 questions related to the story text given. After finishing the assignment, the teacher asked the students to collect their assignments in front of the class. But, the teacher immediately gave an assessment without giving feedback or re-explanation regarding the right and wrong answers.

Let's Read could be an innovative resource for learning English, particularly for those who enjoy reading. According to (Nicholas & Paatsch, 2021) also underlines the availability of internet resources for teachers and students to access and read. It implies that kids may now discover a variety of sources for their reading activities, making it simpler for them to develop an interest in reading.

Based on (Grimshaw, Dungworth, McKnight & Morris, 2007) also claimed that today's young are immersed by computers, the Internet, digital phone, and other technological things that may catch their interest. This shows that students in the twenty-first century seem to be more interested in technology. That is why the *Let's Read* website developed this as an innovative method of reading via digital. Furthermore, an E-book

may be an useful tool for capturing students' attention and motivating them to accomplish the work at hand" (Reid, 2016).

According to the interview, the teacher discovered the student's problem with reading comprehension. Data from observation during the English teacher's class with the students was used to assess their level of English ability. Some students were silent during the class. When the teacher asked a basic question, they did not reply. Some of them were unsure how to execute the assignment assigned by the teacher. They were unable to respond to the reading passage that they had read both orally and written. They frequently remained silent when the teacher told them simple oral tasks. The teacher had to clarify several times before they understood. They frequently inquired about the definitions of any new vocabulary they encountered while reading. This indicates that they did not comprehend the message adequately.

Reading comprehension in English is one of most crucial factors in a student's ability to learn. According to (Poláková, & Klímová, 2019), the purpose of reading is comprehension, although it might be the most hardest ability to achieve, particularly for English language learners. Comprehension is constantly concerned with what would be conveyed or stated in the text, but it is also affected by the reader's prior experiences, goals, sentiments, and current requirements. The same is true for the students, who must grasp the content as well.

Let's Read is also conveniently accessible and operable via the tablet, according to the teacher (Engel, 2014). This application promotes native tongue preservation since it has multilingual characteristics ranging from regional to national. There are also native speakers to help youngsters improve their foreign linguistic competence later in life. As a result, this curriculum enables youngsters to understand tales from inside the nation to overseas by utilizing the national language / culture that they have learnt. *Let's Read* has several advantages, including the ability to be visited for unlimited access offline or online; establishing tales; impressive images and text that can be expanded; short and unambiguous language; convenience since it can be implemented on a gadget; and stories that vary depending on the child life.

In addition, *Let's Read* is beneficial reading instrument, according to the students. The majority of students said the *Let's Read* was simple to read. For instance, they discovered that the letter number and quality were easily understandable, the display layout was visible, and the actions of scrolling upwards, shifting pages, and locating information were simple and comfortable. The recent survey also discovered that the majority of students were pleased with *Let's Read* as a reading book. The outcomes of this investigation complement prior findings indicating students had a positive opinions of *Let's Read*.

Based on the statement above, the teacher also said that the *Let's Read* website is considered an interesting website because there are numerous book themes and it should make students enjoy reading a book more. In addition, there are pictures in each story that provide a special style to this website. Because of these factors, the books in *Let's Read* are thought to be capable of increasing students' reading interest.

Furthermore, the books in *Let's Read* are also still in line with the curriculum. Mr. Huda stated that in addition to using government texts, he also revised other books to help

pupils learn more. If he solely depends on government books, he believes that it is still inadequate since children need to improve vocabulary, and *Let's Read* may be the key to mastering reading comprehension for pupils, especially when it comes to boosting vocabulary.

The Way Student Use *Let's Read* in Practicing Reading

In this study, the researcher observed how Lets Read Asia takes part students in learning English through reading activities in the classroom. It explained the reading activities from stories chosen by the teacher through *Let's Read*.

Based on the data findings, the researcher analyzed the reading process in student involvement through *Let's Read*, and they were able to provide a positive outcome. However, after observing the students, the researcher discovered that reading practice using *Let's Read* may assist them in their reading activities. With some exercise and a way of reading from self-selected books, students may develop a reading practice and be motivated to learn to read with *Let's Read*.

As a result, they will be more enthusiastic to study and will find it simpler to grasp the subject based on their interests. According to (Ulfa & Sudarso, 2020), students who participate in the learning process have a greater understanding, are more attentive in their studying, have a stronger recall, and can comprehend any relation they have learnt. Reading naturally builds students' desire to study and develops their language expertise in their goal that demonstrated students to an engaging environment, according to a similar outcome (Hedge, 1985, cited in Sheu, 2004).

Several students faced problems with their internet connection when practicing reading through *Let's Read* in the online classroom, making it impossible for students to accessing their topic of reading in *Let's Read*. Then, some students struggled to comprehend the story because they lacked language. However, the students were told that if they practiced reading more, this difficulty would be overcome.

Based on the explanation above, it is possible that *Let's Read* can assist students in reading comprehension. *Let's Read* can be an alternate media for learning English, particularly for those who enjoy reading. It implies that students may now discover a variety of sources for their reading activities, making it easier for them to develop a reading habit.

The Student's Response through *Let's Read*

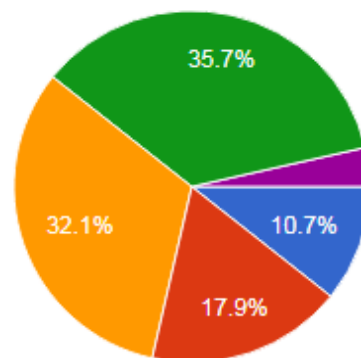
Based on the data findings, the researcher discovered that children can understand reading practice utilizing *Let's Read*, and they responded positively. The majority of them believed that substantial reading practice through *Let's Read* is a fascinating technique for learning English, particularly reading. Based on the findings, children may develop some interest and be motivated to read since the extended reading strategy is straightforward and easy to use. According to (Engel, 2014), an extended reading method planned from this study might have a favorable influence on the learners' attitudes and motivation.

Based on the result from the questionnaire which identifies the use of *Let's Read* website, most of the students stated that it is easy to access that website. *Let's Read* as

digital books can be accessed anywhere. The price is more affordable than printed books, even free.

There are several features that *Let's Read* has to help students in increasing reading comprehension. This programme includes stories written in several languages (multilingual) and rated levels based on reading difficulties, beginning with my first book, level 1, level 2, level 3, level 4, and level 5. *Let's Read* program displays engaging images on each page. *Let's Read*, according to (Ermerawati, 2019), offers stories at several levels ranging from 1 to 5 and in a variety of languages. The story's material may be modified based on the level of reading difficulty; for example, students can begin reading at the beginning level, i.e. my first book or level 1. Students can progressively increase the difficulties of reading materials. This is also supported by the results of the questionnaires that have been distributed to students.

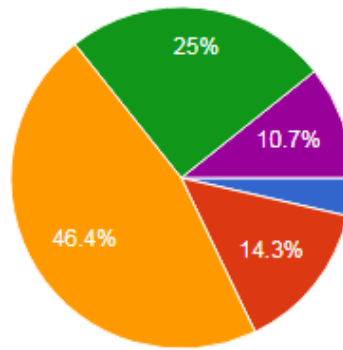
Chart 1. The Availability of Book Levels



According to the survey findings, 35.7 percent agreed that the level placement on the *Let's Read* website is extremely suitable and useful in picking books to read based on the desired reading level. This level modification also seeks to make it easier for children to grasp reading based on their English proficiency level.

Some other option offered by *Let's Read* is the selecting of book themes. Heroes, critical thinking, science, adventure, animals, art and music, non-fiction problem solving, nature, amazing girls, health, comedy, folklore, community, and family and friendship are some of the reading categories available in the *Let's Read* program. This can undoubtedly improve children's enthusiasm to read about topics they are interested in. According to the questionnaire, some students thought the stories in *Let's Read* were easy to comprehend since they were written in simple and direct language. This is changed according to the complexity of the reading content. As a result, it facilitates students' comprehension of the story's content. Not only are the stories given diversified and contextualized to the child's environment, but they are also not simply fairy tales. In addition, there are attractive pictures/illustrations, and the text may be enhanced to clarify the story's substance and improve learners' enthusiasm for reading.

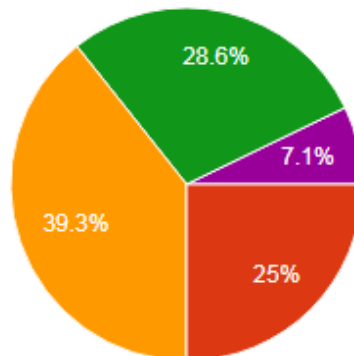
Chart 2. The Book Themes in Let's Read



According to the survey findings, 46.5 percent believe the amount and theme of books on the *Let's Read* website are appropriate. There were several book categories, and the students enjoyed reading using digital books, particularly *Let's Read*, because the book story contained illustrations. This is consistent with the goal of *Let's Read*, which is to cultivate a reading habit in Indonesian children at a young age by implementing digital illustrated stories, creating folk tales with cultural awareness, and interpreting quality children's story stories written at domestically and overseas into the primary language and native language. *Let's Read* promotes children's literacy in novel and creative methods.

Then, students may become interested, and it might encourage them to read because *Let's Read* was a simple and easy program to practice. Practicing reading from this study might also have a favorable influence on the learners' attitude and motivation. This is also supported by the results of the questionnaires that have been distributed to students.

Chart 3. Let's Read is easy to operate



According to the survey findings, 39.3 percent believed that *Let's Read* is easy to operate. Although this media clearly had a negative impact on student's eye health, if they did not use it excessively, it was not a major issue for them. Internet resources for instructors and students to download and read are now available. Students can develop the habit of reading any book they desire to read. Respondent one demonstrated that *Let's Read* may boost students' interest in reading, and she would recommend this online medium to the school teacher.

Reading through *Let's Read* gives students several possibilities to access a variety of stories for their reading exercise. If students were told that *Let's Read* was new to them,

this may be an issue if their school did not supply them with an appropriate reading source. On the other hand, highlights the availability of online resources for instructors and students to download and read. With internet access or online media, we may access various sources of books and tales in our contemporary period, and *Let's Read* might assist students in providing many sources of books for their reading activity.

CONCLUSION

Based on the previous explanation, it can be concluded that the use of *Let's Read* as a book in digital era is considered effective as one of the ways to read online book with many useful features in it students such as book levels, themes, translation, languages, and audio. *Let's Read* is considered as classroom learning material for learning English. It was discovered that there are several advantages to be acquired by applying *Let's Read* because of its numerous advantages. The researcher discovered that reading practice using *Let's Read* may assist them in their reading activities. With some exercise and a way of reading from self-selected books, students may develop a reading practice and be motivated to learn to read with *Let's Read*. Furthermore, the researcher discovered that children can understand reading practice utilizing *Let's Read*, and they responded positively.

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