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Enhancing Students' Recount Writing Skills through Digital Storytelling in an EFL Classroom

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Abstract:
This study aimed to improve students' recount writing skills by implementing digital storytelling in an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom. The study employed Classroom Action Research (CAR), consisting of two cycles, each including planning, action, observation, and reflection stages. The participants were 29 tenth-grade students. Data were collected through writing tests, classroom observations, and student questionnaires. The results showed a significant improvement in students' writing performance. In Cycle 1, most students were categorized at the "poor" and "fair" levels, with a mean score of 61.0. However, in Cycle 2, the mean score increased substantially to 84.1, and 75.9% of the students achieved the "good" level, meeting the predetermined criterion of success. Improvements were observed in all aspects of writing, including content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics. In addition, the findings revealed that students responded positively to the implementation of digital storytelling, demonstrating increased motivation, engagement, and participation. The integration of multimedia elements helped students generate ideas, organize events more coherently, and express their experiences more confidently. These findings suggest that digital storytelling is an effective instructional medium that provides meaningful input and supports the writing process,s rather than merely serving as a tool for digital product creation. Therefore, it is recommended that EFL teachers integrate digital storytelling into writing instruction, particularly to help students develop ideas and improve overall writing quality.

Keywords: Classroom Action Research; Digital Storytelling; EFL; Recount Writing; Writing Skills

Introduction

Writing is widely recognized as one of the most complex skills in second and foreign language learning, as it requires the integration of linguistic knowledge, cognitive processes, and rhetorical organization. In English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts, writing plays a crucial role in enabling learners to express ideas and participate in academic discourse (Hyland, 2019). However, many EFL learners struggle with writing due to limited vocabulary, inadequate grammatical knowledge, and difficulties in organizing ideas coherently (Nunan, 2003; Tiwari, 2005). These challenges often result in low writing performance and reduced confidence, particularly when students are required to express personal or complex ideas in written form (Al Fadda, 2012; Husna & Multazim, 2019). Therefore, there is a need for instructional approaches that support both linguistic competence and idea organization in writing.

Recount text, as one of the key genres in secondary school English curricula, requires students to retell past experiences in a clear and chronological sequence. This genre demands the use of appropriate past tense forms, logical organization, and cohesive devices (Gerot & Wignell, 1994; Derewianka, 2011). However,

EFL students often encounter difficulties in producing effective recount texts, particularly in organizing events, using correct grammar, and developing sufficient content (Richards & Renandya, 2002; Hyland, 2007). In many classrooms, writing instruction still emphasizes grammatical accuracy rather than supporting students in the process of generating and organizing ideas (Raimes, 1983; Jamiluddin, 2021). As a result, students' writing tends to be fragmented and less meaningful, indicating the need for more engaging and process-oriented instructional strategies.

The integration of digital technology in language education offers new opportunities to enhance student engagement and learning outcomes. One promising approach is digital storytelling (DST), which combines traditional storytelling with multimedia elements such as images, audio, and video (Robin, 2008; Lambert, 2003). DST has been shown to improve students' motivation, creativity, and engagement, while also supporting writing development through structured processes such as planning, drafting, and revising (Smeda et al., 2014; Hwang & Chen, 2020; Yang & Wu, 2012; Nguyen, 2020). By integrating multimodal elements, DST provides a meaningful context for students to express their experiences and develop their writing skills.

However, despite its potential, previous studies on digital storytelling have largely focused on general writing ability, narrative writing, or oral communication (Sadik, 2018; Razmi et al., 2014). There is still limited research specifically examining its effectiveness in improving recount writing skills in EFL contexts. Moreover, most studies have employed experimental designs, with few studies utilizing Classroom Action Research (CAR) to explore how DST can be implemented in real classroom settings. In addition, the role of DST in supporting specific aspects of writing—such as content development, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics—remains underexplored.

Therefore, this study aims to address these gaps by investigating the implementation of digital storytelling as an instructional medium to improve students' recount writing skills through a Classroom Action Research design. In this study, DST is not only viewed as a product but also as a process that provides scaffolding to support students in developing and organizing their ideas effectively.

Literature Review

Teaching Recount Writing in EFL Contexts

Writing in EFL contexts involves complex interactions between linguistic competence, cognitive processes, and rhetorical organization (Hyland, 2019; Nunan, 2003). While genre awareness is essential for producing meaningful texts (Hyland, 2007), classroom practices often prioritize grammatical accuracy over meaning-making processes (Raimes, 1983; Richards & Renandya, 2002). This imbalance has been identified as a key factor contributing to students' difficulties in organizing ideas and expressing experiences effectively in written form. Compared to process-oriented approaches, which emphasize drafting and revising (Hyland, 2003; Tribble, 1996), traditional approaches tend to limit students' engagement and development of coherent writing.

Within genre-based pedagogy, recount text serves as a foundational genre for developing students' ability to narrate past experiences in a structured way. Its schematic structure—orientation, sequence of events, and reorientation—requires both organizational and linguistic control (Derewianka, 2011; Gerot & Wignell, 1994). However, empirical studies indicate that EFL learners consistently struggle with recount writing, particularly in maintaining coherence, applying past tense forms, and elaborating ideas (Husna & Multazim, 2019; Emilia, 2011). Compared to other genres such as narrative or descriptive texts, recount writing places greater emphasis on chronological sequencing, which often becomes a major challenge for

learners with limited language resources. This suggests that instructional support should not only address grammar but also scaffold idea organization and text structuring.

Digital Storytelling in Language Learning

Digital storytelling (DST) has been increasingly proposed as a pedagogical response to the limitations of traditional writing instruction. By integrating text, images, audio, and video, DST reflects a shift from monomodal to multimodal literacy practices (Robin, 2008; Lambert, 2013; Kress, 2010). Unlike conventional writing tasks, DST situates writing within a meaningful and creative communicative context, allowing learners to construct and present their stories using multiple semiotic resources (Hafner & Miller, 2021).

Previous studies have demonstrated that DST enhances learner engagement, creativity, and motivation (Yang & Wu, 2012; Sadik, 2018). Compared to traditional writing instruction, which often isolates writing from authentic communication, DST promotes collaborative learning and learner autonomy through activities such as scriptwriting, multimedia selection, and peer presentation (Hafner & Miller, 2021; Robin, 2016). Furthermore, within the multiliteracies framework (New London Group, 1996; Hafner, 2014), DST aligns with the need to develop both language proficiency and digital literacy. However, while these studies highlight the general benefits of DST, they often treat it as a broad instructional tool without examining its specific impact on particular genres of writing.

Digital Storytelling for Developing Writing Skills

Research on DST has consistently reported its positive effects on writing development, particularly in narrative writing contexts. The scriptwriting phase in DST requires learners to plan, organize, and revise their ideas, which supports the development of coherent written texts (Balaman, 2018; Robin, 2008). Empirical findings show that DST improves students' ability to organize ideas and enhances motivation (Yang & Wu, 2012; Razmi et al., 2014), as well as grammatical accuracy and vocabulary through iterative revision processes (Sadik, 2018; Nguyen, 2020). Compared to traditional writing instruction, DST provides a more integrated learning experience that connects writing with meaningful communication and creative expression.

However, a critical review of the literature reveals several limitations. First, most studies focus on general writing skills or narrative genres, with limited attention to recount writing as a distinct genre with specific structural demands. Second, existing research predominantly employs experimental or quasi-experimental designs, which may not fully capture the complexity of classroom implementation. In contrast, Classroom Action Research (CAR) offers a more context-sensitive approach to examining how instructional strategies function in real teaching environments. Third, few studies explicitly analyze how DST supports specific components of writing, such as content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics in an integrated manner.

Conceptual Framework and Research Position

This study is grounded in the integration of genre-based pedagogy, process writing, and multiliteracies theory. Genre-based pedagogy provides a framework for understanding the structure and purpose of recount texts (Derewianka, 2011), while process writing emphasizes stages such as planning, drafting, and revising (Hyland, 2003). Multiliteracies theory (New London Group, 1996) underpins the use of digital storytelling as a multimodal learning tool that supports meaning-making across different modes.

Within this framework, digital storytelling is conceptualized not merely as a product but as a scaffolding tool that facilitates:

1. Idea generation through visual and auditory stimuli
2. Organization of events through narrative sequencing
3. Language development through iterative drafting and revision
4. Engagement through multimodal and collaborative learning

By integrating these perspectives, DST is expected to support both the process and product of writing, particularly in developing recount texts.

Positioning itself within this gap, the present study extends previous research by focusing specifically on recount writing in EFL contexts, employing a Classroom Action Research design, and examining multiple dimensions of writing performance. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the implementation of digital storytelling as a strategy to enhance students' recount writing skills.

The research questions are formulated as follows:

1. To what extent does the implementation of digital storytelling improve students' recount writing skills in terms of content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics?
2. What are students' responses toward the use of digital storytelling in learning recount writing?

Methodology

The data collected in this study were analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative approaches to examine students' writing improvement and their learning experiences during the implementation of digital storytelling.

First, quantitative data were obtained from students' writing tests, including the pre-test and post-tests conducted at the end of each cycle. Students' recount texts were assessed using an analytic writing rubric covering content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics. Each component was scored to produce an overall writing score for each student. The students' mean scores were then calculated to determine the overall writing performance of the class. Improvement in students' writing ability was measured by comparing the mean scores of the pre-test, post-test of Cycle 1, and post-test of Cycle 2. The mean score was calculated using the following formula:

Mean score = $\Sigma X / N$

Where ΣX represents the total score obtained by all students and N represents the total number of students.

Second, qualitative data obtained from classroom observations, field notes, and student questionnaires were analyzed using thematic analysis to gain deeper insights into students' participation, engagement, and responses toward the implementation of digital storytelling. The analysis followed several systematic stages adapted from qualitative data analysis procedures (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

1. Data Familiarization
   All qualitative data, including observation notes, field notes, and questionnaire responses, were read repeatedly to gain a comprehensive understanding of the data. During this stage, important points related to students' behavior, interaction, and responses were noted.

2. Initial Coding
   The data were then coded by identifying meaningful units of information. Codes were assigned to segments of data that reflected relevant aspects such as student participation, engagement, motivation, collaboration, and difficulties encountered during the learning process.

3. Category Development
   Similar codes were grouped into broader categories to organize the data systematically. For example, codes related to active participation, group discussion, and task involvement were categorized under "student engagement," while codes related to difficulties in vocabulary or grammar were categorized under "learning challenges."

4. Theme Identification
   The categories were further analyzed to generate overarching themes that represented patterns in the data. These themes included, for instance, increased student engagement, improved confidence in writing, enhanced idea organization, and positive responses toward digital storytelling.

5. Data Interpretation
   The identified themes were interpreted in relation to the research questions and supported by relevant excerpts from the data. This stage aimed to explain how digital storytelling influenced students' learning experiences and writing development.

6. Triangulation
   To ensure the trustworthiness of the findings, data triangulation was applied by comparing information obtained from different sources, namely classroom observations, field notes, and student questionnaires. This process helped validate the consistency of the findings and reduce potential bias.

The qualitative findings were then integrated with the quantitative results to provide a comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness of digital storytelling in improving students' recount writing skills. Through this combined analysis, the study not only measured students' writing improvement but also explained how and why the instructional intervention influenced their learning process.

Results

The effectiveness of digital storytelling in improving students' recount writing skills was examined systematically in accordance with the research design. The implementation of the study followed the planned schedule, with the researcher working collaboratively with the classroom English teacher. At the beginning of the study, the researcher explained the research objectives and procedures to the students. The intervention was then carried out through a series of actions, followed by data collection, analysis, and interpretation. The results of the writing tests across the two cycles are presented systematically. Overall, the findings indicate a continuous improvement in students' writing performance, progressing from lower levels (poor and fair) in Cycle 1 to higher levels (good) in Cycle 2. The results are presented in tables and figures, beginning with a detailed analysis of each writing aspect and followed by a comprehensive description of students' overall performance.

For the first criterion of the indicator of success, it was determined that 70%–80% of students should reach the "good" level. This means that they achieved scores of at least 27–30 in content, 14–20 in organization and vocabulary, 18–25 in language use, and 4–5 in mechanics. It indicated that they **were able to develop**

ideas clearly, organize their writing coherently, use appropriate vocabulary, apply correct grammatical structures, and demonstrate proper writing mechanics in composing recount texts.

The Result of the First Cycle

The implementation of Cycle 1 was conducted in four meetings. In the first meeting, the researcher introduced the concept of recount text and explained its purpose, generic structure (orientation, sequence of events, and re-orientation), and language features, particularly the use of the simple past tense. Students were also introduced to digital storytelling through simple examples. However, most students still showed limited understanding of how to construct a recount text properly. They had difficulties in identifying the structure and expressing their ideas in written form.

In the second meeting, the researcher provided more examples of recount texts through digital storytelling media. Students watched short digital stories and were guided to analyze the structure and language features of the texts. They then worked in groups to arrange events in a logical sequence and identify the elements of recount texts. Although some students began to understand the structure, many of them still struggled to organize their ideas coherently and to use appropriate vocabulary and grammar.

In the third meeting, guided writing activities were conducted to help students practice structuring recount texts. Students worked collaboratively to develop short recount paragraphs based on given prompts and digital storytelling materials. The researcher provided more intensive guidance, focusing on idea development, organization, and language use.

In the fourth meeting, students were asked to write their own recount texts based on their personal experiences using their own words. This writing activity served as the post-test of Cycle 1. During this stage, it was observed that most students still encountered significant difficulties in developing ideas, organizing their writing, and applying correct grammatical structures.

At this stage, digital storytelling functioned as a supporting instructional medium that provided input and guidance for students, rather than as a product to be created.

Table 1 showed the test results of students' writing recount texts about personal experiences. Overall, most of the students obtained "poor" and "fair" scores. As can be seen in the table, for each aspect, there were some students who could not develop and elaborate their ideas clearly in writing. Meanwhile, a few students were able to express their ideas in simple sentences, but lacked coherence and organization in arranging their paragraphs. Students also had difficulties in determining the appropriate generic structure of recount text, such as orientation, events, and re-orientation.

In terms of language use, vocabulary became another major problem for students when writing their stories. Most of them obtained "poor" scores due to limited vocabulary, inappropriate word choices, and frequent direct translation from their first language, which affected the clarity of their writing. In addition, many students made grammatical errors, particularly in the use of the simple past tense, which is essential in recount texts.

These findings indicate that students still faced considerable challenges in all aspects of writing, including content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics. Therefore, the detailed results of each aspect are described as follows.

a. Content

In terms of content, most students were still at the "poor" and "fair" levels. Out of 29 students, about

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17 students (58.6%) were categorized as "poor," while **9 students (31.0%)** were at the "fair" level. Only **3 students (10.4%)** reached the "good" level. Many of them were not able to develop their ideas clearly and completely. Their writing lacked sufficient details about the events they experienced, making the story unclear and less meaningful.

b. Organization

In the aspect of organization, **16 students (55.2%)** were in the "poor" category, and **10 students (34.5%)** were in the "fair" category. Only **3 students (10.3%)** achieved the "good" level. Most students had difficulties arranging their ideas into a coherent structure. They did not follow the generic structure of recount text properly, such as orientation, events, and re-orientation, and their ideas were not logically sequenced.

c. Vocabulary

Vocabulary became one of the biggest challenges for the students. A total of **18 students (62.1%)** were categorized as "poor," while **8 students (27.6%)** were "fair," and only **3 students (10.3%)** were "good." Most students had limited vocabulary, used inappropriate word choices, and often repeated the same words. Some of them also translated directly from their first language, resulting in unnatural expressions.

d. Language Use

In terms of language use, especially grammar, **19 students (65.5%)** were at the "poor" level, **7 students (24.1%)** were "fair," and only **3 students (10.4%)** reached the "good" level. The most common errors were related to the use of the simple past tense. Many students used incorrect verb forms, mixed tenses, and produced incomplete sentences.

e. Mechanics

For mechanics, **15 students (51.7%)** were categorized as "poor," **11 students (37.9%)** were "fair," and **3 students (10.4%)** were "good." Students still made many errors in punctuation, spelling, and capitalization. These mistakes affected the readability and clarity of their writing.

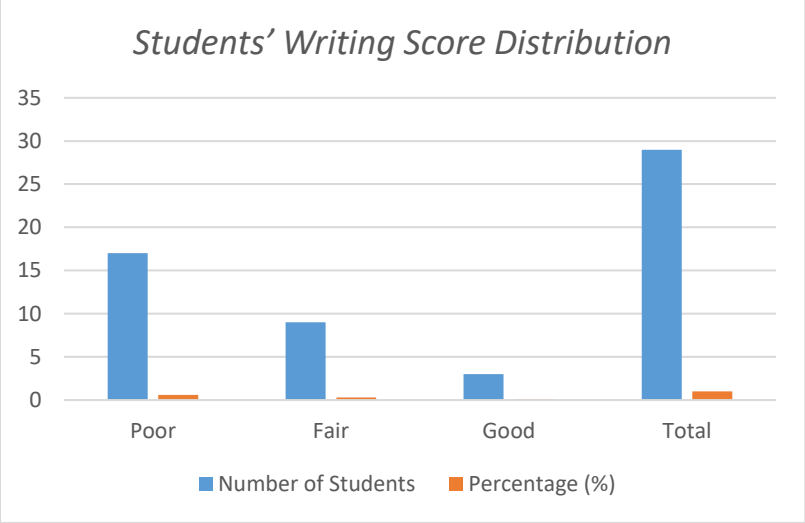
Based on the criteria of success previously mentioned, Figure 4.1.1 showed significant information that the criterion of success was not fulfilled in the first cycle. Most of the students were still at the "poor" and "fair" levels based on their total scores. This indicates that students still had limited understanding of recount text structure and content. The results showed that there were **17 students (58.6%)** in the "poor" level, **9 students (31.0%)** in the "fair" level, and only **3 students (10.4%)** in the "good" level. The mean score of students' writing in Cycle 1 was approximately 61.0, indicating that the overall writing performance was still at a low level. The mean score was calculated based on the midpoint of each category. Therefore, the researcher decided to continue to the second cycle because the results were still far from the indicator of success, which required 70%–80% of students to achieve the "good" level.

The following section presents a more detailed description of the students' results based on their total scores, as illustrated in Table 1.

No	Level	Number of Students	Percentage (%)
1	Poor	17	58.6%
2	Fair	9	31.0%
3	Good	3	10.4%

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No	Level	Number of Students	Percentage (%)
	Total	**29**	**100%**



Reflection First Cycle

After applying digital storytelling and asking students to write a recount text, the researcher then evaluated and analyzed the results. After combining the scores from the raters, the researcher found that there were many problems in the first cycle. This was shown in **Table 1 and Figure 1**, where most students obtained "poor" scores in almost all aspects of the assessment criteria. It indicated that they had little or inaccurate understanding of **the content and structure of recount texts.**

When writing the recount text, some students did not organize their ideas well. They were unable to arrange the events in a logical sequence and often ignored the generic structure, such as orientation, events, and re-orientation. As a result, their writing was difficult to follow and lacked coherence.

In addition, students still faced difficulties in developing their ideas. Most of them wrote very limited information without sufficient details to support their main ideas. This made their writing unclear and less meaningful. In terms of vocabulary, students had limited word choices and often used inappropriate or repetitive words. Some of them also directly translated from their first language, which affected the naturalness of their sentences.

Furthermore, in language use, many students made errors in grammar, especially in using the simple past tense, which is essential in recount texts. They frequently used incorrect verb forms and inconsistent tenses. In mechanics, students still made mistakes in punctuation, capitalization, and spelling, which reduced the readability of their writing.

Based on these findings, it can be concluded that the implementation of digital storytelling in the first cycle had not yet achieved the expected results. Therefore, some improvements were needed for the next cycle. The researcher planned to provide clearer explanations, give more examples of recount texts, guide students more intensively during the writing process, and use more engaging digital storytelling media to help students better understand the material.

The Result of the Second Cycle

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Table 2 showed the results of students' writing recount texts about their personal experiences through digital storytelling in the second cycle.

The implementation of Cycle 2 was conducted in four meetings. In the fifth meeting, the researcher focused on addressing the problems identified in the first cycle, particularly in developing ideas, organizing texts, and using appropriate grammar. Clearer explanations about the generic structure of recount text were provided, along with more examples through digital storytelling media. In the sixth meeting, students watched additional digital stories and were guided to analyze the structure and language features more deeply. They worked collaboratively to identify orientation, sequence of events, and re-orientation, as well as the use of past tense and temporal connectors. **In the seventh meeting, guided writing activities were conducted** to provide more intensive support. Students practiced developing their own recount texts based on digital storytelling materials, while the researcher provided feedback on organization, vocabulary, and grammar. The media helped them recall experiences, organize events chronologically, and express their ideas more clearly in written form. **In the eighth meeting, a writing test was administered** in which students were asked to write a recount text based on their personal experiences using their own words. This activity served as the post-test of Cycle 2. In this cycle, students showed significant improvement in all aspects of the assessment criteria. The results indicated that the majority of students had reached the "good" level, and only a small number remained at the "poor" and "fair" levels. This finding shows that the indicator of success was successfully achieved, as more than 70% of students reached the expected level.

The improvement indicates that students had developed a better understanding of how to write recount texts properly. Through digital storytelling, they were able to recall, organize, and express their personal experiences more clearly. They also demonstrated a better understanding of the generic structure, including orientation, sequence of events, and re-orientation. In addition, their use of vocabulary and grammar, especially the simple past tense, showed noticeable improvement.

a. **Content**
   In terms of content, students showed significant improvement. Out of 29 students, 2 students (6.9%) were categorized as "poor," 5 students (17.2%) were at the "fair" level, and 22 students (75.9%) reached the "good" level. Most students were able to develop their ideas clearly and provide sufficient details about their personal experiences.
b. **Organization**
   In the aspect of organization, 2 students (6.9%) were in the "poor" category, 5 students (17.2%) were in the "fair" category, and 22 students (75.9%) achieved the "good" level. Students were able to organize their ideas coherently and follow the generic structure of recount text properly.
c. **Vocabulary**
   Vocabulary also improved significantly. A total of 2 students (6.9%) were categorized as "poor," 5 students (17.2%) were "fair," and 22 students (75.9%) were "good." Students used more appropriate and varied vocabulary in expressing their ideas.
d. **Language Use**
   In terms of language use, especially grammar, 2 students (6.9%) were at the "poor" level, 5 students (17.2%) were "fair," and 22 students (75.9%) reached the "good" level. Students showed better mastery of grammatical structures, particularly in using the simple past tense correctly.
e. **Mechanics**
   For mechanics, 2 students (6.9%) were categorized as "poor," 5 students (17.2%) were "fair," and 22 students (75.9%) were "good." Students made fewer errors in punctuation, spelling, and capitalization, resulting in clearer and more readable writing.

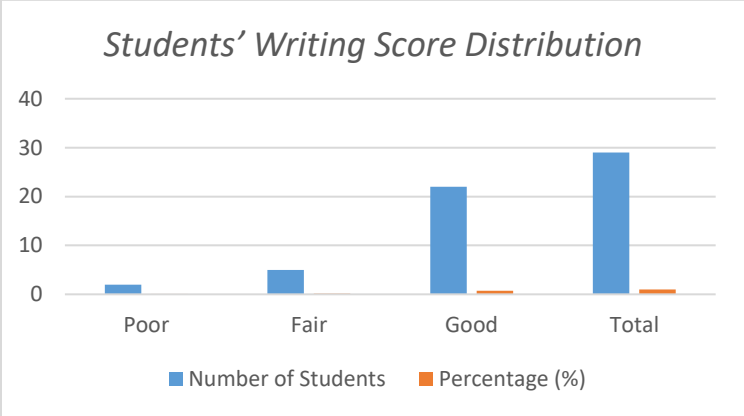
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Overall, the results of Cycle 2 demonstrate that the implementation of digital storytelling was effective in improving students' recount writing skills, as evidenced by the significant increase in the number of students achieving the "good" level and the successful attainment of the predetermined criterion of success.

Table 2

Students' Writing Score Distribution in Cycle 2 (N = 29)

No	Level	Number of Students	Percentage (%)
1	Poor	2	6.9%
2	Fair	5	17.2%
3	Good	22	75.9%
	Total	**29**	**100%**



Based on the established criteria of success, the results of Cycle 2 indicate that the target was successfully achieved. A total of 22 out of 29 students (75.9%) reached the "good" level, while 5 students (17.2%) were categorized as "fair" and only 2 students (6.9%) remained in the "poor" category. The mean score increased significantly to 84.1, exceeding the required standard of 70%–80% of students achieving the "good" level. These findings confirm that digital storytelling was effective in improving students' recount writing skills, leading to the termination of the research in Cycle 2.

Overall, students' writing performance improved substantially across the research cycles. The mean score increased from 61.0 in Cycle 1 to 84.1 in Cycle 2, indicating a clear progression in students' writing ability. This improvement was evident across all aspects of writing, including content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics.

From an analytical perspective, the improvement suggests that digital storytelling provided not only meaningful input but also effective scaffolding for students' writing development. Initially, students struggled with idea generation, organization, and grammatical accuracy. However, after the revised implementation in Cycle 2, they were able to produce more coherent texts, organize events chronologically, and apply appropriate language features, particularly the simple past tense. This indicates that the combination of multimodal input and guided practice played a crucial role in facilitating students' writing development.

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The reflection of Cycle 2 highlights that students demonstrated significant improvement in all aspects of writing. They were able to develop ideas more clearly, organize their texts according to the generic structure of recount writing, and use more appropriate vocabulary and grammatical forms. Errors in mechanics were also reduced, resulting in clearer and more readable texts.

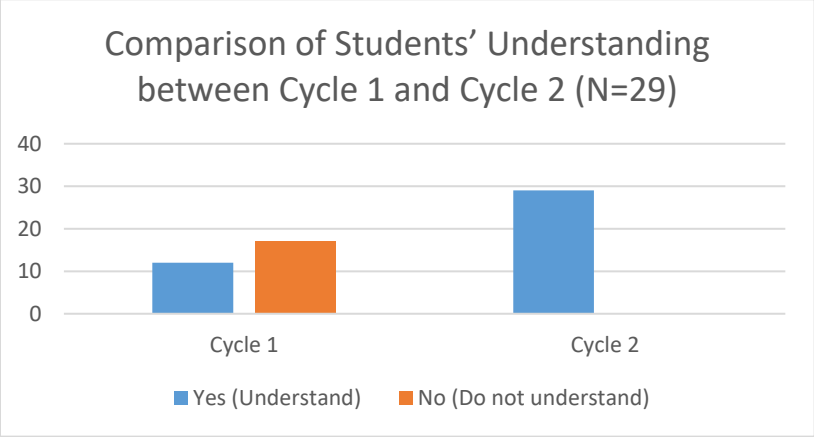
This improvement can be attributed to the refinement of instructional strategies, including clearer explanations, more examples, and more intensive guidance during the writing process. Importantly, digital storytelling functioned as an effective scaffolding tool that supported students in recalling experiences, organizing ideas, and expressing them in written form.

Students' responses toward the implementation of digital storytelling were highly positive. Observation data indicated increased participation, motivation, and engagement during the learning process. Students were more active in discussions, showed greater curiosity, and demonstrated improved confidence in completing writing tasks.

Analytically, this positive response suggests that digital storytelling created a more interactive and meaningful learning environment. The integration of multimedia elements not only enhanced students' interest but also supported their understanding of recount text structure and language features. As a result, students were better able to engage in the writing process and improve their performance.

In summary, the findings demonstrate that digital storytelling was effective in improving students' recount writing skills. The improvement is supported by both quantitative evidence (increase in mean scores and achievement levels) and qualitative findings (enhanced engagement and writing performance). These results indicate that digital storytelling serves as an effective instructional strategy that integrates meaningful input, structured guidance, and student engagement in EFL writing classrooms.

Questionnaire



The chart shows a significant improvement in students' understanding between Cycle 1 and Cycle 2. In Cycle 1, only 12 students understood the material, while 17 students did not. However, in Cycle 2, all 29 students (100%) understood the material, and no students remained in the "do not understand" category. This indicates that the implementation of digital storytelling was highly effective in improving students' understanding of recount text. Based on the questionnaire results, it can be seen that all students gave positive responses toward the implementation of digital storytelling in learning recount text. All **29 students (100%)** answered "Yes" to all questions.

Discussion

The findings of this study demonstrate that the implementation of digital storytelling significantly improved students' ability in writing recount texts, as reflected in the increase in mean scores from 61.0 in Cycle 1 to 84.1 in Cycle 2. The shift of most students from "poor" and "fair" to "good" levels indicates that the intervention effectively addressed key writing difficulties. This supports the view of Hyland (2019) that writing development involves both linguistic competence and the ability to organize ideas meaningfully. In this study, digital storytelling facilitated both aspects by providing contextualized input and models of structured texts.

The initial difficulties observed in Cycle 1—particularly in idea development, organization, and grammatical accuracy—are consistent with Nunan (2003) and Richards and Renandya (2002), who emphasize the cognitive and linguistic complexity of writing in EFL contexts. However, the improvement in Cycle 2 suggests that digital storytelling functioned effectively as a scaffolding tool. Through exposure to digital stories, guided practice, and feedback, students were able to engage in key writing processes such as planning, organizing, and revising (Hyland, 2003). This indicates that the effectiveness of digital storytelling lies not merely in its multimodal features, but in how it is pedagogically integrated into structured writing instruction.

Furthermore, the improvement in students' ability to organize recount texts according to their generic structure supports genre-based theory (Derewianka, 2011; Gerot & Wignell, 1994). Digital storytelling helped students visualize and sequence events, which contributed to more coherent narratives. Similarly, gains in vocabulary and grammatical accuracy align with previous findings (Smeda et al., 2014; Sadik, 2018), suggesting that multimodal input and iterative revision can enhance language use.

However, while these findings largely confirm previous studies (Yang & Wu, 2012; Hafner & Miller, 2021), this study extends the literature by showing that digital storytelling is particularly effective for recount writing, not only for general or narrative writing. In addition, unlike many experimental studies, this research demonstrates how digital storytelling can be implemented and refined through Classroom Action Research in an authentic classroom setting.

Despite these contributions, several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the study was conducted in a single class with a relatively small number of participants, which limits the generalizability of the findings. Second, the duration of the intervention was relatively short, making it difficult to determine the long-term impact of digital storytelling on writing development. Third, the study relied primarily on classroom-based assessment and self-reported data, which may introduce subjectivity. Future research could involve larger samples, longer intervention periods, and more rigorous assessment methods to provide more comprehensive evidence.

Another critical point is that the success of digital storytelling in this study was closely tied to the instructional design, including guided practice, feedback, and scaffolding. This suggests that digital storytelling alone may not automatically improve writing skills; rather, its effectiveness depends on how it is integrated into the teaching process. Without sufficient guidance, it may function only as an engaging tool rather than a meaningful learning strategy.

Overall, the findings indicate that digital storytelling is a valuable instructional medium for improving students' recount writing skills, particularly when combined with structured guidance and process-oriented instruction. It not only enhances students' writing performance but also increases their engagement and motivation in learning.

Conclusion

This study aimed to improve students' recount writing skills through the implementation of digital storytelling in an EFL classroom using Classroom Action Research. The findings indicate that digital storytelling effectively enhanced students' writing performance, as reflected in the increase of mean scores from 61.0 in Cycle 1 to 84.1 in Cycle 2, with the majority of students reaching the "good" level. Beyond these quantitative gains, the results show that digital storytelling supported students in generating ideas, organizing texts more coherently, and applying more accurate language use. It also contributed to increased motivation, participation, and confidence in writing activities. Importantly, the effectiveness of digital storytelling in this study was closely linked to its role as a scaffolding tool integrated with guided instruction, feedback, and iterative practice, rather than merely as a product-oriented activity.

For future research, it is recommended to involve a larger and more diverse sample to enhance the generalizability of the findings and to conduct longer-term studies to examine the sustainability of students' writing development. Further investigation is also needed to explore the use of digital storytelling across different writing genres and to examine how varying levels of instructional support influence its effectiveness. In addition, employing more rigorous research designs may provide deeper insights into the impact of digital storytelling on language learning.

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