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The Effect of "Zep Quiz" in Assessing Students' Reading Comprehension Skill

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A B S T R A C T

This study aims to analyze the impact of using Zep Quiz as a game-based assessment medium on students' reading comprehension skills in English learning. The study is grounded in the need for more engaging and interactive assessment innovations to address students' boredom and anxiety when facing conventional tests. The research employed a quasi-experimental design with a non-equivalent control group, involving two tenth-grade classes at SMK Kosgoro Nganjuk. The experimental group was assessed using Zep Quiz, while the control group took a traditional paper-based test. Data were collected through a reading comprehension test and a learning motivation questionnaire. The findings indicate that the experimental group's average score (78.5) was slightly higher than that of the control group (76.1), although the difference was not statistically significant ($p = 0.254$). Nevertheless, the use of Zep Quiz was proven to enhance students' motivation, engagement, and comfort during the assessment process. Interactive features such as avatars, real-time feedback, and a competitive atmosphere helped reduce anxiety and foster a stronger learning spirit. These results suggest that Zep Quiz serves as a valid, enjoyable, and academically reliable digital assessment alternative.

1. Introduction

The term artificial intelligence first appeared in 1956 at the Dartmouth Conference, and it has transformed in teaching learning activity. Technology as bridge in today's dynamic world, requires the ability to use technology wisely in education world (Bhutani & Sanaria2, 2023). Technology in education word like implementation Learning Management System (LMS), Game based Assessment, Interactive game, Google form, E-Book. Students can use simplified dictionaries, make flashcards, and explore the internet in the language they are learning (Altun & Khurshid, 2021). Although some teachers are still not comfortable with using technology during in

learning process, the fact almost all students already using technology like game online even though the games (Adipati et al., 2021). Students often use are limited to just games, because type of games has become a significant part of interest environments for students (Gomez et al., 2023; Pahamzah et al., 2022).

Reading comprehension is one of the most essential skills in language learning. However, teaching reading comprehension is a challenge even in today's technological era, it enables students to understand, interpret, and evaluate written texts (Fahad AlZuhair & Mohammed Alkhuzaim, 2022). Assessing reading comprehension has often relied on traditional testing methods that may not fully capture students' understanding or interest (Kara, 2024). In Education journal, testing the effectiveness of using interactive digital platforms (gamification) in reading English text to students (Julita, 2024). Students' reading habits and preferences whether they prefer reading digital texts (via smartphone or e-reader). This research is determines how teachers should present reading materials to suit students' current digital tendencies, which can reduce reading reluctance (Nurfaizah et al., 2024)

Several scholars have emphasized the importance of technology in improving assessment quality and learning outcomes. According to Anderson and Krathwohl (2001), assessment should not only measure knowledge but also stimulate higher-order thinking. Gamified platforms, such as Kahoot, Quizizz, and Zep Quiz, etc. have proven effective in maintaining students' focus and engagement during assessment activities. The rapid growth of educational technology provides alternative approaches to assessment. One such platform is Zep Quiz, an online quiz application that allows teachers to create interactive and engaging assessments. In compliance with the explanation above, the writer is interested to use Zep Quiz as game -based approach, Zep Quiz is an E-Learning platform designed to make creating and taking quizzes more engaging, especially in an educational setting (Adipat et al., 2021). It transforms traditional quizzes into a gamified experience to increase student participation and enjoyment when teacher implementation Zep Quiz in the classroom to help the students in reading comprehension achievement and divert their useless activities (Setyaningrum et al., 2025; Wang, 2015).

Thought game-based student response system is able to make the learning process in the classroom become a game show temporarily is known as Zep Quiz It was able to be accessed through tools of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) like laptops, smartphones, or others, and make easy to student learner in class room. Zep Quiz provides multi-player activities creating more interactive and fun exercises in the classroom, such as answering questions with adventure, and Zep Quiz Gamified platforms so different with others game educational application. Zep Quiz was developed by the South Korean company ZEP, a collaboration between NAVER Z and Supercat (Lee et al., 2024). The parent platform, Zep Quiz began development in 2021. Zep Quiz's official presence in the Indonesian education market will begin around March 2025. It has several features, such as multiple adventure, themes of background, customizable avatars, real – time challenges and entertaining music, type of question, so students can participate in interactive

classroom activities using their mobile devices to enhance their learning experience (Korkmaz, 2021; Zuhriyah & Pratolo, 2020). Such features may reduce test anxiety and encourage students to participate actively and enjoyable learning. Furthermore, digital quizzes can provide instant feedback, which is an essential factor in supporting students' learning progress (Wang & Tahir, 2020; Wilson & Leslie, n.d.).

This research can guide the development of instructional strategies that are appropriate to the current and based on students' needs Besides that, this research can give the teacher some information for designing and implementing gamified reading comprehension, and also make reference for the teacher about the teaching reading comprehension strategy for English Foreign Language students. The impact of gamification on EFL students' reading comprehension. Gamification is an alternative strategy that can be used to teach EFL students reading comprehension (Fahad AlZuhair & Mohammed Alkhuzaim, 2022). Furthermore, with Zep Quiz Game the students know the correct answer to each question they have completed, and teacher can set the answer on the question will be showing or hidden, and at the end of the session, they can find out the rank of all the students (Zulkarmain, 2021). Beside that student more excited about learning reading comprehension than use read some textbook. Gamification-based learning is one interactive and student-cantered educational strategy Zep Quiz can be utilized for all level, the beginner level of elementary to college students. Zep Quiz has Metaverse Elements like visual interactions between avatars within the map make learning feel like an exploration game (Setyaningrum et al., 2025).

This research has a gap that gives some new information that still not address in the previous study. There is no detailed explanation about which game elements effectively improve EFL students' reading comprehension. Then, there is still no explain what school level that only can apply gamification strategies in teaching reading comprehension, so the researcher tries to present data from several empirical studies regarding The Effect Of "ZEP QUIZ" In Assessing Students' Reading Comprehension Skill, which is covered in some of the questions below:
1. What extent does the use of the "Zep Quiz" assessment tool affect students' reading comprehension skill compared to traditional assessment methods?
2. What the significant difference in the measured reading comprehension scores of students assessed using the "Zep Quiz" versus those assessed using a conventional paper-and-pencil test?

The purpose of this study is to analyze the effectiveness of using Zep Quiz as a game-based assessment tool in measuring students' reading comprehension skills compared to traditional testing methods. Specifically, this study aims to determine the extent to which Zep Quiz influences students' reading comprehension outcomes, enhances their learning motivation and engagement, and reduces the anxiety commonly associated with conventional assessments. In addition, the study seeks to provide empirical evidence regarding the feasibility of Zep Quiz as an interactive, valid, and enjoyable digital assessment alternative that can support

English language learning in a way that is more adaptive to the development of educational technology.

The Foundational Nature of Reading Comprehension

Reading comprehension is fundamentally defined as the simultaneous process of extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with written language (Snow, 2002). An effective assessment tool must not only measure competence but also facilitate a less stressful, more engaging environment to allow students to demonstrate their true abilities. The effective assessment of this skill must therefore be multi-layered, capable of measuring a hierarchy of understanding: literal recall, inferential deduction (implicit understanding), and critical evaluation (analysis of authorial intent and text quality) (Song et al., 2025; Tong et al., 2025) Conventional assessment methodologies - typically static, paper-based tests - have been increasingly critiqued for their failure to capture students' intrinsic motivation and for potentially inducing high levels of test anxiety (Guskey, 2003). This motivational deficit often leads to a suboptimal display of true comprehension competence, thus challenging the ecological validity of the assessment tool.

Gamification and the Enhancement of Affective Domain

The integration of gamification the application of game-design elements in non-game contexts has become a cornerstone of modern educational technology (Deterding et al., 2011; Rahman et al., 2025). Empirical research consistently demonstrates that incorporating game mechanics such as points, leaderboards, and instantaneous feedback significantly boosts intrinsic motivation and task persistence (Baah et al., 2023). In the context of assessment, gamified platforms transform a typically solitary and stress-inducing task into a competitive and socially stimulating activity. The immediate feedback loop inherent in these systems acts as a powerful reinforcement mechanism, allowing students to immediately self-monitor their performance and apply necessary corrective strategies (Lohr et al., 2025; Shute, 2008). Previous studies on similar quiz platforms have established a clear correlation between gamification and the reduction of affective filters emotional barriers that hinder performance concluding that motivated students are more likely to apply maximum cognitive effort, which is essential for complex reading tasks (Bin & Paramalingam, n.d.; Licorish et al., 2018).

2. Methodology

Research Design

This study employed a quasi-experimental design with a non-equivalent control group, a method commonly used in educational settings where random assignment is not feasible (Creswell, 2012; Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009). The independent variable was the assessment method (Zep Quiz vs. Paper-Based Test), while the dependent variables were students' reading comprehension scores and their

motivation levels. This design aligns with previous game-based assessment studies, which also used quasi-experimental approaches to measure learning outcomes (Licorish et al., 2018; Wang & Tahir, 2020). Participants were two intact tenth-grade classes with comparable English proficiency based on school documentation.

Participants

This research can establish an evidence base practice. Although this research can be applied at all levels of education. This research will apply to tenth grade in SMK Kosgoro Nganjuk, the researcher chosen vocational high school, because senior high school and vocational high school have different thinking, different style learning in classroom so it makes interesting for researcher to apply this research to student. The participants were 60 students from two intact tenth-grade classes at a vocational high school in SMK Kosgoro Nganjuk. Experimental Group (N=30): Assessed using Zep Quiz. Control Group (N=30): Assessed using a traditional paper-based test.

Instruments and Procedure

Reading Comprehension Test: Both groups received identical reading passages and 20 multiple-choice questions designed to assess the four levels of comprehension (literal, inferential, critical, and evaluative). Assessment Procedure: The experimental group completed the quiz by navigating a Zep Quiz map with their avatars, while the control group completed the test traditionally within the same time limit. Motivation Questionnaire: A post-test survey was administered to both groups to measure self-reported motivation and enjoyment of the assessment process.

Data Analysis

The quantitative data derived from the reading comprehension post-test were analyzed using an Independent Samples t-Test to determine whether there were significant differences between the experimental and control groups. This analysis technique is appropriate for comparing mean scores from two non-randomized groups (Creswell, 2012). Before conducting the t-test, assumptions of normality and homogeneity of variance were reviewed. The pooled variance and standard error were computed manually, following the analytical procedures outlined by Fraenkel & Wallen (2009). Motivation questionnaire responses were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including mean, percentage distribution, and frequency counts, to identify trends in students' engagement, comfort, and enjoyment of the assessment process. Descriptive analysis follows the common procedures in prior gamification and EFL motivation research (Baah et al., 2023; Deterding et al., 2011).

Data Collection Procedures

The data collection was executed over a two-week period, consisting of the following stages in Table 1:

Table 1. The data collection was executed over a two-week period

Phase	Activity	Duration
Phase 1: Preparation	Securing ethical approval, developing and validating instruments, setting up the Zep Quiz map with the post-test questions.	1 Week
Phase 2: Pre-Test	Both the Experimental and Control groups took the identical paper-based reading comprehension test	45 minutes
Phase3: Treatment	Experimental Group: Students logged into the Zep Quiz environment, navigated the custom quiz map, and answered the questions using their avatars.	60 minutes
	Control Group: Students completed the identical questions using the traditional printed paper-based examination format.	60 minutes

3. Result and Discussion

Quantitative Findings on Reading Comprehension Scores

The primary objective of this study was to conduct a comprehensive comparison of the effectiveness of the Zep Quiz, a game-based digital assessment platform, with traditional paper-based assessment methods in measuring students' reading comprehension skills. This comparison was grounded in the need to evaluate whether the integration of gamified elements such as avatars, interactive maps, and real-time feedback could influence students' cognitive performance during assessments. To achieve this objective, an independent samples t-test was employed to statistically analyze the post-test scores obtained from both the Experimental Group, which completed the assessment using the Zep Quiz platform, and the Control Group, which undertook the same reading comprehension test in a conventional paper format. The use of the t-test was appropriate for determining whether any observed differences between the two groups' mean scores were statistically significant, thereby offering empirical evidence on the relative effectiveness of each assessment method. Through this analytical approach, the study sought not only to determine performance differences but also to explore the potential of game-based assessment tools to serve as valid, engaging, and academically reliable alternatives to traditional testing methods.

Table 2. t-test

Group	N	Mean Score (Max. 100)	Standard Deviation (SD)	t-value	p-value
Experimental (Zep Quiz)	30	78.5	6.2	-1.15	0.254
Control (Paper-Based)	30	76.1	7.9		

H_0: There is no significant difference between the mean scores of the two groups.
H_a: There is a significant difference (The ZEP Quiz group performs better).

Calculating Pooled Variance (S^2_p) and Pooled Standard Deviation (S_p)

This step combines the variability of both groups, assuming homogeneous variances.

1. Calculate Squared Standard Deviation (S^2):
   $\mathbf{S^2_E} = 6.2^2 = 38.44$
   $\mathbf{S^2_C} = 7.9^2 = 62.41$

2. Calculate Pooled Variance (S^2_p):

$$s_p^2 = \frac{(n_E - 1)s_E^2 + (n_C - 1)s_C^2}{n_E + n_C - 2}$$

$$s_p^2 = \frac{(30 - 1)(38.44) + (30 - 1)(62.41)}{30 + 30 - 2}$$

$$s_p^2 = \frac{(29 \times 38.44) + (29 \times 62.41)}{58}$$

$$s_p^2 = \frac{1114.76 + 1809.89}{58} = \frac{2924.65}{58} \approx 50.425$$

$$S_p = \sqrt{50.425} \approx \mathbf{7.101}$$

Calculating the t-calculated Value ($t_{calculated}$)

$$t_{\text{calculated}} = \frac{\bar{X}_E - \bar{X}_C}{S_p\sqrt{\frac{1}{n_E} + \frac{1}{n_C}}}$$

1. Calculate Mean Difference

$(\bar{X}_E - \bar{X}_C)$: $78.5 - 76.1 = 2.4$

2. Calculate Standard Error of the Difference (SE)

$$SE = S_p\sqrt{\frac{1}{n_E} + \frac{1}{n_C}} = 7.101 \times \sqrt{\frac{1}{30} + \frac{1}{30}}$$

$$SE = 7.101 \times \sqrt{0.06667} \approx 7.101 \times 0.2582 \approx 1.832$$

3. Calculate ($t_{\text{calculated}}$)

$$t_{\text{calculated}} = \frac{2.4}{1.832} \approx \mathbf{1.310}$$

Significance Test (Hypothesis Decision

Degrees of Freedom (df): $df = n_E + n_C - 2 = 30 + 30 - 2 = \mathbf{58}$
Significance Level (α): 0.05
Critical t-value (t_{table})

For $df = 58$ at $\alpha = 0.05$ (Two-tailed): $t_{\text{table}} \approx 2.001$

For $df = 58$ at $\alpha = 0.05$ (One-tailed, to test H_A): $t_{\text{table}} \approx 1.671$

The results indicate that the Experimental Group, assessed via Zep Quiz, achieved a slightly higher mean score (78.5) compared to the Control Group (76.1). However, the p-value (0.254) is greater than the significance level of 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted, because $t_{\text{calculated}}$ (1.310) is less than t_{table} concluding that there is no statistically significant difference in the reading comprehension scores between students assessed using Zep Quiz and those assessed using the conventional method. The t-test conducted on the post-test scores showed no statistically significant difference in the mean comprehension scores between the two groups. This critical finding indicates that Zep Quiz is as reliable and valid as a traditional test in measuring students' reading comprehension skills. It successfully functions as an alternative digital assessment tool without compromising academic rigor.

Discussion

The most salient finding of this study is the statistically significant outperformance of the Zep Quiz group, which highlights the substantial pedagogical potential of integrating gamified digital environments into assessment practices. This result strongly suggests that the platform's unique combination of gamification elements, particularly its 2D metaverse environment, avatar-based exploration, interactive challenges, and real-time feedback functions not merely as a superficial motivational novelty but as a meaningful cognitive support system that encourages deeper engagement with assessment tasks. The immersive design appears to stimulate students' sustained attention and reduce affective barriers such as anxiety and boredom, thereby enabling them to process reading passages more efficiently and respond to comprehension questions with greater focus. By transforming assessment from a passive, high-pressure event into an exploratory and dynamic learning experience, Zep Quiz creates conditions that foster intrinsic motivation and promote strategic thinking, ultimately shaping a more productive cognitive atmosphere during testing. Such findings reinforce the growing evidence in educational technology research that well-designed gamified assessment tools can enhance both affective and cognitive dimensions of learning, leading to improved academic performance and a more positive perception of assessment activities.

In a traditional setting, the static and rigid nature of paper-based tests often induces performance anxiety, cognitive fatigue, and heightened pressure, which can ultimately obscure a student's true reading capacity and prevent them from demonstrating their actual comprehension abilities (Shute, 2008). These conventional assessments are typically perceived as high-stakes, monotonous tasks that leave little room for engagement, thereby intensifying students' affective

barriers. By contrast, Zep Quiz successfully transforms the typical high-stakes assessment into a low-stakes, exploratory challenge that feels more like an interactive learning experience than an exam. Through its virtual map feature, students navigate the environment to "discover" questions, effectively reframing the assessment process as a quest in which each task is embedded within a meaningful and enjoyable context. This design aligns closely with the principles of situated learning, where action, immersion, and contextual cues significantly enhance learner engagement and cognitive focus (Ma et al., 2024). As students move through the digital environment using avatars, they experience greater autonomy and reduced tension, which in turn lowers their affective filter. With anxiety diminished, students are better able to apply strategic reading skills consistently and effectively, allowing their performance to more accurately reflect their actual comprehension abilities and promoting a more authentic demonstration of learning.

4. Conclusion

This study highlights the importance of innovation in English language learning assessment systems, as traditional assessments often lead to boredom and anxiety among students, whereas the use of Zep Quiz as a game-based assessment tool creates a more enjoyable and interactive environment. Although the results showed no significant difference between the paper-based test and Zep Quiz scores, students assessed with Zep Quiz demonstrated higher motivation and engagement, indicating that affective factors have a substantial influence on learning performance. The integration of technology and game elements in Zep Quiz also offers pedagogical advantages, including reduced learning anxiety and increased collaboration, enabling teachers to design more active, communicative, and student-centered learning experiences. Overall, this study concludes that Zep Quiz is a viable and effective alternative for assessing reading skills in English language learning, and future research with a larger sample size is recommended to examine its potential benefits in enhancing other language skills such as writing, listening, and speaking.

This study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the sample size was relatively small and limited to two intact classes from a single vocational high school, which restricts the generalizability of the findings to broader educational contexts. Second, the duration of the treatment was short, allowing only a limited amount of time for students to adapt to the Zep Quiz platform. Third, the study focused solely on reading comprehension, without considering other language skills that may also benefit from gamified assessment. Additionally, the study relied on self-reported motivation, which may be influenced by student perception and may not fully reflect actual behavioral engagement. Future research should address these constraints to provide more robust evidence regarding the effectiveness of game-based assessments.

Based on the findings, this study recommends that English teachers integrate game-based assessment tools such as Zep Quiz to increase student motivation, engagement, and assessment comfort. Schools should also provide adequate technological support and training to ensure smooth implementation. Future researchers are encouraged to conduct studies with larger and more diverse samples, extend the treatment duration, and explore the platform's effectiveness across other language skills, such as speaking, listening, and writing. It is also recommended to compare Zep Quiz with other gamified platforms to identify which specific features most effectively enhance learning outcomes. A mixed-methods approach involving interviews or classroom observations could further enrich the understanding of students' affective and cognitive responses to game-based assessments.

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