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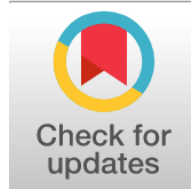

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ZepQuiz Game-Based Learning for Improving Students' Narrative Reading Skills: ZepQuiz: Pembelajaran Berbasis Permainan untuk Meningkatkan Keterampilan Membaca Naratif Siswa

ZepQuiz: Pembelajaran Berbasis Permainan untuk Meningkatkan Keterampilan Membaca Naratif Siswa

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Abstract

General background: Reading comprehension remains a core challenge in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning. **Specific background:** Many high school students struggle to understand narrative text structures and implicit meanings. **Knowledge gap:** Few studies have investigated the integration of the ZepQuiz platform within Game-Based Learning (GBL) to enhance narrative reading comprehension at the secondary level. **Aims:** This study examined the use of ZepQuiz as a digital learning medium to improve students' reading comprehension and motivation in narrative texts. **Results:** Using a one-group pretest-posttest quantitative design, findings from 35 students showed a statistically significant improvement ($p < 0.05$) in reading comprehension and motivation scores after ZepQuiz implementation. **Novelty:** The research highlights ZepQuiz's ability to integrate gamification elements—leaderboards, instant feedback, and time challenges—to promote engagement and cognitive processing. **Implications:** ZepQuiz can be applied as an innovative and interactive learning approach to support digital-based English education.

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Introduction

Reading is one of the most important abilities in language learning since it facilitates knowledge acquisition, broadens horizons, and fosters critical thinking skills. Reading exercises allow pupils to expand their vocabulary, learn language structure, and gain a better awareness of varied settings for language use. Reading abilities are critical while learning English as a foreign language (EFL) since they serve as the foundation for developing other language skills such as writing, speaking, and listening. Despite the importance of reading, many high school students struggle to grasp books, particularly when they are long, complex, or contain unfamiliar jargon. Narrative writing is a sort of text that many pupils struggle with. Unlike descriptive or factual texts, narrative texts require readers to comprehend not just the language parts, but also the structure of the plot, which includes orientation, complication, climax, resolution, and reorientation. Understanding this structure is essential so that students may follow the plot logically and comprehend the message contained within it. However, according to a number of studies, many students continue to struggle with deeply grasping narrative literature. Numerous studies have demonstrated that students face challenges in identifying generic structures and the sequence of events in narrative stories, which can impede their comprehension of the overall meaning [1]. Previous studies have shown that many students struggle to identify the main idea and moral values in a text because they cannot distinguish between main and supporting information [2]. Furthermore, Many students show only superficial comprehension and struggle to extract implicit meaning, similar to findings about "poor comprehenders" in high school who significantly underperform on inference-based comprehension tasks [3]**.**

Low student participation in the classroom exacerbates difficulties in reading narrative materials. According to observations at numerous high schools, many pupils struggle to participate in reading activities because teachers continue to employ traditional teaching approaches. Teachers typically merely explain the content, offer reading assignments, and ask students to submit their findings, with no variation in media or activities to assist text comprehension. The lack of interactive media makes the learning experience passive and teacher-centered. This circumstance necessitates the development of novel learning methodologies that can assist students in better comprehending the content and structure of texts.

Game-Based Learning (GBL) platforms such as ZepQuiz can improve students' comprehension of narrative texts, by integrating interactive quizzes, real-time feedback, and competitive features, ZepQuiz helps students better understand the structure and content of reading materials [4]. Previous research demonstrated that ZepQuiz could serve as an effective medium for reading comprehension practice, although applied in German language learning, the findings of Feriansyah and Titaley suggest its potential adaptability for English reading classes [5]. However, the majority of these research concentrate on general reading skills rather than understanding narrative text structure. Furthermore, research on the use of ZepQuiz a digital quiz platform that allows students to answer questions in real time in a game-like environment is currently quite limited. ZepQuiz has the ability to assist students grasp narrative texts since it includes features like leaderboards, point systems, and time challenges that may be used to assess comprehension of text structure and content. However, empirical research on the efficacy of ZepQuiz in the context of English reading learning, particularly on narrative texts at the high school level, remains scarce. As a result, this study is critical for filling this vacuum by investigating how the use of ZepQuiz as a learning medium might greatly improve students' reading skills.

The purpose of this study is to assess the effectiveness of using ZepQuiz as a Game-Based Learning medium to improve high school students' narrative text reading skills. This study's findings are expected to make a theoretical and practical contribution to the development of digital game-based reading learning systems. Theoretically, this study contributes to a better understanding of the application of Game-Based Learning to language learning. Practically, the findings can be utilized as a guide for instructors and prospective teachers to create more exciting, interactive, and effective reading sessions using technology such as Zep Quiz.

Many research in recent years have focused on the use of Game-Based Learning to improve students' narrative reading skills. Previous research shows that implementing a Game-Based Learning model assisted with Wordwall significantly increased students' interest in reading fantasy stories and helped them better engage with the structure of narrative texts [6]. Similarly, this research aligns with the findings of earlier investigations, which discovered that game-based digital media can assist students in enhancing their vocabulary and understanding of narrative texts [7]. Furthermore, other researchers developed an AR novel game media for narrative text that was evaluated as feasible and appropriate by students and experts, indicating its potential to enhance comprehension of narrative structure and text flow [8].

Schema Theory proposes that reading comprehension happens when readers connect new information to their prior knowledge [9]**.** This schema activation can be accomplished through quiz-based exercises like those provided by ZepQuiz, in which students relate new concepts to previous reading experiences. Hidayatullah found that using schema activation strategy significantly improved students' reading comprehension, including their ability to identify main ideas and supporting details in English texts [10]**.**

Furthermore, in The Impact of the Walking Dead Video Game on Students' Reading Comprehension on Narrative Text *by Nadhif* found that, although the video game did not significantly increase students' scores in multiple-choice tests of reading comprehension, it did succeed in boosting their motivation to engage with narrative texts[11]. As a result, these results lend credence to the notion that incorporating digital media such as ZepQuiz can create a more dynamic and successful learning experience for high school students seeking to improve their narrative text reading abilities.

Method

A. Research Design

This study took a quantitative approach, with a one-group pretest-posttest design. This design was chosen to assess the effectiveness of ZepQuiz as a Game-Based Learning (GBL) medium in improving students' narrative reading skills. In this design, the sample group consisted of only one class, with no control group. However, measurements were obtained twice: before and after therapy. Thus, a comparison of pretest and posttest scores revealed the extent to which ZepQuiz could help strengthen narrative reading skills [12]. This study's independent variable is the use of ZepQuiz for narrative text learning. The dependent variable is students' narrative reading abilities, which are divided into five major dimensions:

- Comprehension,
- Vocabulary understanding,
- Text structure awareness,
- Inference making, and
- Speed and accuracy.

Class	Pre-Test	Intervention	Post-Test
A	O1	X	O2

Table 1. **Tabel 1.** Design Of Pre-Test and Post-Test Group
Information:

A: The class that receives the intervention or treatment (ZepQuiz Game-Based Learning).

O_1. Explain the pre-test

X: The research intervention

O_2. Explain the post-test

B. Population and Sample

This study included all 11th-grade students at Senior High School in Sidoarjo for the school year 2025/2026. Students at this level are between the ages of 15 and 17, and while they have studied narrative texts in accordance with the curriculum, the majority still struggle to comprehend narrative elements thoroughly. The sample was drawn from this population using purposive sampling, which involved picking one class that satisfied the study's criteria. Students who provided informed consent to participate in the study, attended at least 75% of the total meetings, and had studied the basic material on narrative texts were eligible for inclusion. Exclusion criteria were established for students who refused to participate, did not take the pretest or posttest, or had a high rate of absence. The number of learners in the selected class exceeded thirty, which was deemed sufficient for statistical analysis.

C. Data Collecting

The data collection approach in this study was divided into two stages: test and treatment, followed by two sessions of therapy utilizing ZepQuiz, a game-based learning platform. All exercises were conducted with 11th-grade students from one of Senior High School in Sidoarjo during English language classes on Narrative Texts. the researcher issued a link and QR code that directed students to the ZepQuiz platform for the pre-test. The test had 10 multiple-choice questions and 10 true/false questions designed to assess students' understanding of narrative texts. The procedure was as follows.

- Students accessed the game using the link or barcode provided by the researcher.
- They used their names and attendance numbers as avatar identities in the game.
- After all participants had successfully registered, the researcher started the gaming session, and students began doing the question individually.

1) Pre-Test Descriptive Statistics

The initial stage of the research began with a diagnostic test (pre-test) aimed at mapping students' basic abilities in understanding narrative texts. The research subjects were all 35 students in grade XI, who were selected using total sampling.

1. **What is the primary purpose of a narrative text?**
   a. To describe things
   b. To entertain the reader
   c. To give instructions
   d. To compare ideas

2. **Which of the following is NOT an example of narrative text?**
   a. Fairy tales
   b. Novels
   c. Reports
   d. Fables

3. **What does the Orientation part of a narrative text introduce?**
   a. The moral lesson
   b. The characters, setting, and time
   c. The problem or conflict
   d. The solution

4. **Narrative text can only be based on fictional stories.**
   TRUE/**FALSE**

5. **The complication stage shows the conflict or problem in the story.**
   TRUE/FALSE

Figure 1. *Sample Question Pre-Test*

2. Post-Test Descriptive Statistics

After students complete a series of treatments that include initial treatment and follow-up treatment, the next step is to conduct a final test (post-test). The purpose of this post-test is to measure the effectiveness of the learning intervention using ZepQuiz on students' motivation and ability to read narrative texts.

1. The main communicative purpose of a narrative text is to …

a.Present logical arguments to influence the readers

b. Provide enjoyment by telling a sequence of events

c. Give a factual description of real-life phenomena

d. Highlight similarities between different events

2. Which of the following would least likely be categorized as a narrative text?

a. A legendary folktale

b. A fictional novel

c. A scientific report

d. A moral fable

3. The Orientation stage in a narrative text primarily serves to introduce …

a. The values or messages implied in the story

b. The characters, settings, and initial circumstances

c. The conflict or rising action of the plot

d. The resolution and closure of the story

4. Narrative texts must always originate from fictional events or characters.

TRUE/**FALSE**

5. The complication stage presents the main conflict or problem experienced by the characters.

TRUE/FALSE

Figure 2.   *Sample Question Post-Test*

Treatment 1 (Initial)

Students were invited to read a narrative text called "Cinderella," which they examined collaboratively to determine text structure (orientation, complication, resolution) and language elements based on their prior knowledge. Following the conversation, the researcher provided a clear and thorough description of the narrative text material, including its social role, structural organization, and language elements common to narrative writing. This activity served as both an initial evaluation (diagnostic assessment) and the first stage of quantitative data collection (pre-test data).

Treatment 2 (Follow Up)

In the following meeting, the researcher led the second treatment session, which also served as the post-test data collecting. To improve student retention, the program began with review questions and prompting discussions that referenced previous topics. Following that, pupils were instructed to read a true story named "A Glass of Milk" narrative text. Students assessed

the text's structure and language features using their knowledge from the previous meeting. Following the discussion, the researcher gave students access to the ZepQuiz platform for the post-test, which had a similar question structure to the pre-test but used slightly more complex language to assess students' higher-order thinking skills (HOTS). Throughout the process, the researcher and supervising teacher constantly observed student interaction to ensure academic integrity, active participation, and data validity.

The ZepQuiz records were then exported and evaluated with SPSS to determine whether there were any significant differences between the pre-test and post-test scores. Thus, the data collection process using two ZepQuiz-based treatment sessions not only allowed the researcher to collect valid and reliable quantitative data, but it also provided students with an interactive, competitive, and motivating learning experience that aided their comprehension of narrative texts.

To ensure fairness and validity, both the pre-test and post-test used similar forms and were piloted with students from outside the research sample before being officially administered. The ZepQuiz system automatically recorded students' completion time, accuracy rate, and number of erroneous responses, allowing researchers to objectively assess their reading performance, particularly in terms of speed and accuracy.

No.	Aspect	Description of Assessment Focus
1.	Comprehension	Ability to identify main ideas and specific details within the text.
2.	Vocabulary Mastery	Understanding of key terms, synonyms, antonyms, and contextual meanings.
3.	Text Structure Awareness	Recognition of narrative organization (orientation, complication, climax, and resolution).
4.	Inference Making	Ability to draw conclusions and interpret implicit meanings based on textual context.
5.	Speed and Accuracy	Ability to answer correctly and efficiently within a limited time.

Table 2. The scoring rubric for this study covered five important aspects

The inclusion of these five aspects aligns with several theoretical frameworks in reading comprehension research. Grabe & Stoller emphasize the interaction of decoding and contextual processing [13]. Nation highlights the importance of vocabulary depth for comprehension [14]. Meyer & Freedle discuss how text structure awareness helps readers identify story flow [15]. Kintsch explains inference as an essential part of constructing meaning [16]. And Anderson underlines fluency's role in efficient reading [17]. Together, these theories provide a robust foundation for the scoring rubric used in this study, ensuring that both cognitive and linguistic dimensions of reading comprehension are properly assessed.

D. Data Analysis

Data analysis was done in two stages. The first stage was data presentation, which entailed displaying the scores in tables, graphs, and diagrams to demonstrate score distribution and comparisons between pretest and posttest outcomes.

The second stage is inferential analysis, which tests the research hypothesis. The Shapiro-Wilk test is used to first determine data normality. If the data is normally distributed, a paired sample t-test is performed to compare pre- and post-treatment ratings [12]. If the data is not normally distributed, the Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test is employed as a non-parametric alternative.

The assessment of the students was determined by the number of correct responses they achieved in the examination. Every correct answer earned five points, while wrong responses earned none. The overall score was subsequently transformed to a 0–100 scale by employing the following formula:

$$\text{Score} = \frac{\text{Number of Correct Answers}}{20} \times 100$$

.

Figure 3.

This scoring system ensured objectivity and consistency across both pre-test and post-test. Students' performances were then categorized into five levels:

Range	Category
86 – 100	Excellent
75 – 85	Good
60 – 74	Adequate

50 – 59   Poor
< 50   Very Poor
Table 3.
Each aspect carried a specific weighting in the evaluation process, prioritizing comprehension, followed by

vocabulary, text structure, inference, and speed–accuracy. The consistent use of this rubric throughout both assessments enhanced the reliability and fairness of the data collection technique. This study also assessed the effect size to determine how much the use of ZepQuiz affected students' reading ability. For parametric testing, the effect size was determined using Cohen's d, but for non-parametric tests, the r formula was applied. With these stages, the analysis demonstrated statistical significance while also providing a summary of ZepQuiz's impact on enhancing students' narrative text reading skills.

Result and Discussion

A. Research Results

The study's findings are significant. The results are presented systematically to fulfil the research objectives, which are to assess the usefulness of ZepQuiz in enhancing students' learning motivation and reading abilities in narrative texts. This section presents findings from the pre-test, treatment, post-test, and interviews. The results are presented both descriptively and quantitatively, using paired-sample t-tests in SPSS to determine the significance. The results are presented systematically to fulfil the research objectives, which are to evaluate the usefulness of ZepQuiz in enhancing research and establishing a solid scientific foundation.

The study began with a pre-test given to all 11th-grade students to determine their baseline proficiency in narrative texts. The pre-test was administered using ZepQuiz and consisted of 20 multiple-choice questions covering narrative structure (orientation, complication, resolution), vocabulary, and inferential understanding. The results were collected automatically and evaluated with SPSS. The descriptive statistics revealed that the mean score fell into the intermediate group, with significant variation in performance. The standard deviation revealed significant variations between high- and low-achieving students.

This section presents the study's findings on evaluating the effectiveness of using ZepQuiz in enhancing students' learning motivation and reading comprehension of narrative texts. The results are presented descriptively and quantitatively, using paired-sample t-tests in SPSS. The discussion also integrates Game-Based Learning Theory[18] and Schema Theory[19].

1) Implementation Procedure

The post-test is carried out after all treatment sessions are completed, with a duration of 40 minutes. Like the pre-test, the test is conducted in the 11th-grade classroom under direct supervision by the researcher and teacher. The ZepQuiz platform is used again because of its advantages in real-time scoring and ease of exporting test results.

To maintain consistency, the conditions for the post-test are the same as the pre-test: students take the test individually without using dictionaries or external sources. This ensures that the results of the post-test truly reflect the improvement caused by the treatment, rather than being influenced by external factors.

2) Paired Sample t-Test

Paired Samples Test

| | | | | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | | | | |
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Lower	Upper	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pair 1 Pre_Test - Post_Test	-.829	1.224	.207	-1.249	-.408	-4.004	34	.000

Figure 4. T*able 3. The results of the Paired Sample t-test* showed a **Sig. (2-tailed) value < 0.05**, which means that there is a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test values.

As shown in Table 3**,** the paired-sample t-test was performed to assess the difference in students' reading comprehension scores prior to and following the introduction of ZepQuiz-based Game-Based Learning, the paired-sample t-test was performed to assess the difference in students' reading comprehension scores prior to and following the introduction of ZepQuiz-based Game-Based Learning. The evaluation revealed an average difference of -0.829, accompanied by a standard deviation of 1.224 and a standard error mean of 0.207. The 95% confidence interval of the difference ranged from -1.249 to -0.408, indicating that the difference was statistically meaningful because the interval did not include zero. The test results obtained a t-value of -4.004 with 34 degrees of freedom (df = 34) and a Sig. (2-tailed) value of 0.000, which is lower than 0.05.

These findings show a notable disparity between the pre-test and post-test scores, suggesting that students improved their performance following the treatment. The negative mean difference shows that the post-test mean (14.09) exceeded the pre-

test mean (13.26), indicating an improvement in students' reading comprehension. Consequently, the use of ZepQuiz as a Game-Based Learning platform greatly enhanced students' performance and involvement in reading narrative texts [20].

3) Discussion (theory + interpretation)

The remarkable gain in both motivation and reading comprehension scores indicates that ZepQuiz is a useful learning tool. According to Game-Based Learning Theory [18], ZepQuiz's interactive and gamified aspects create a compelling learning environment that encourages students to actively participate and receive immediate feedback, facilitating deeper cognitive processing.

The rise in motivation can also be explained by the ARCS Model of Motivation [21]. ZepQuiz engages attention with interactive aspects, improves relevance by linking questions to narrative text resources, boosts confidence with tiny victories, and reinforces satisfaction with prizes. These elements contribute to students' internal and extrinsic motivation.

According to Schema Theory [19], students were able to better organize and integrate new material with past knowledge, resulting in improved reading comprehension. The narrative texts in ZepQuiz enabled students to activate existing schemas, notice patterns, and make meaningful connections, thereby improving comprehension and retention.

Finally, the data show that using ZepQuiz not only boosts students' motivation but also enhances reading comprehension, supporting the combination of game-based learning, motivational techniques, and schema-based cognitive processes in language learning.

In addition to the quantitative data, 10 randomly selected students participated in semi-structured interviews. According to the interviews, the majority of students considered ZepQuiz to be more enjoyable and challenging than traditional techniques. One learner commented, "The interactive quizzes, real-time feedback, and competitive elements provided a stimulating and enjoyable learning experience, encouraging students to participate actively in their learning process" [22].

B. Discussion

The rise in average scores from pre-test to post-test suggests that using ZepQuiz-based game-based learning increases students' comprehension of narrative texts. The paired-sample t-test confirms this observation with a significant difference ($p < 0.05$). This indicates that students not only remembered the questions but also expanded their conceptual knowledge, demonstrating active cognitive engagement in the learning process.

The increase in motivation scores suggests that gamified components such as points, leaderboards, and instant feedback have a beneficial impact on students' engagement [20][23]. The average motivation scores improved considerably between pre-test and post-test, indicating increased involvement. This is consistent with gamification theory, which suggests that competition and interactive aspects can boost intrinsic motivation. Since one earlier author stated, "Gamification has been shown to increase students' intrinsic motivation as they feel challenged, valued, and more emotionally engaged in the learning process" [24]. Thus, ZepQuiz serves as both an evaluation tool and a strategy for enhancing learning engagement [21].

Using ZepQuiz aligns with the qualities of Generation Z students, who are comfortable with digital technology, making this learning style particularly ideal. Adapting learning media to students' interests enhances relevance, captures their attention, and fosters active engagement. This is consistent with the premise that learning models should be tailored to the characteristics of the students, the classroom setting, and the learning objectives [19]. As one author points out, "The selection of models must be adjusted to the characteristics of the students, the class situation, and the goals to be achieved" [25]. Learning becomes more relevant and successful when students use their preferred media.

ZepQuiz features an appealing and user-friendly visual interface that helps students focus on the topic while minimizing cognitive load. Improved post-test performance indicates that students were able to respond to questions more accurately and efficiently, implying that visual and interactive presentations improve comprehension [18]. Including unstable internet connections and limited device access. To mitigate these issues, backup materials in PDF format were provided, hybrid learning approaches were applied, and collaboration with local authorities was undertaken to improve connectivity [26][27][28]. These technical constraints must be considered in quantitative research, as they can affect data validity and reliability.

The findings suggest that digital tools like ZepQuiz can offer an inclusive and tailored learning environment, thereby enhancing motivation, engagement, and reading comprehension [18][21][19][29]. This is consistent with earlier research, which shows that digital technology not only enhances language abilities but also fosters a dynamic and inclusive learning environment. Holmes and Tuomi argue that AI can play a critical role in personalizing education and meeting diverse learner needs [29], while one participant stated that "the use of such technology not only improves language skills but also fosters a more dynamic and inclusive learning environment" [22]. These findings suggest a practical proposal for schools to utilize ZepQuiz as an alternative evaluation and learning technique in high school classrooms.

Overall, the study reveals a statistically significant improvement in students' learning outcomes, indicating that game-based learning, as implemented through ZepQuiz, enhances motivation, engagement, and the overall learning experience. Integrating such digital resources can provide an effective instructional model for widespread adoption in high school education.

Conclusion

According to the findings, using ZepQuiz as a game-based learning medium can help students enhance their reading comprehension and motivation when learning narrative texts. The improved post-test scores and students' active participation in the lessons demonstrate that learning with ZepQuiz made the class more interesting and fun.

The features inside ZepQuiz—such as quick feedback, game points, leaderboards, and time limits—made students more focused and enthusiastic. These elements also helped them understand how a narrative text is organized and how language is used in it. As a result, the reading activities became more lively and easier to follow.

This study also shows that ZepQuiz can turn a teacher-centered class into a more student-oriented learning process. Students had the chance to explore materials more freely while teachers could monitor their progress in real time. Overall, this study supports the notion that Game-Based Learning not only enhances students' comprehension of the topic but also their confidence and willingness to participate in class activities. It also demonstrates that digital media can make English learning more appealing to Generation Z, who are already comfortable with interactive technology.In summary, ZepQuiz is a simple yet effective technique to make English reading courses more entertaining. Future research might test this strategy on other abilities, such as writing, listening, and speaking, to see how it affects students' learning habits over time.

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