Online Gamification Platforms for Practicing EFL Students' Reading Skills: A Systematic Review

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ABSTRACT

Currently, gamification is one of the highly discussed topics among English as a Foreign Language (EFL) practitioners. It is worth mentioning that the rising interest in Information and Communications Technology (ICT) increases the preference for learning towards online gamification. This study aims to provide a review regarding online gamification platforms for practicing EFL students' reading skills. This research used library research method and followed the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guideline developed by Page et al. to collect and reduce data, and finally present a transparent, complete, and accurate review. The data were 20 articles published worldwide between 2012 and 2022 and sourced from journal finders of ScienceDirect, Springer, Taylor & Francis, and Google Scholar. Furthermore, this study used NVIVO 14 and Microsoft Excel 2016 to analyze the selected data and Mendeley for reference management. The results showed that Kahoot!, Quizizz, Socrative, Bibliobattle, Classcraft, ClassDojo, Duolingo, Genially, Into the Book, Mreader, Memrise, Padlet, Quizlet, and ReadTheory.org are feasible to be used to practice EFL students' reading skills, with Kahoot! and Ouizizz as the most popular. In addition, the context of the studies involved as the research data such as the year published, educational level, national origins, and methodologies were also mentioned. Further, it is implied that EFL teachers can use online gamification platforms to leverage not only students' motivation and engagement in practicing students' reading skills but also their learning achievements through enjoyable and interactive learning while allowing students to acquire ICT skills.

Keywords: gamification, EFL, learning, reading skill, systematic review

INTRODUCTION

Among English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners, reading skill is one of the most vital skills to acquire. It enables learners to comprehend and digest the text of the target language efficiently (Khan et al., 2020, p. 277).

Moreover, reading skill allows EFL learners to involve their analysis and evaluation abilities, making it valuable to support their academic achievements, and even further engage them to participate in social and economic activities (Khasawneh, 2021, p. 225; Mulatu & Regassa, 2022). Looking at the importance of reading skills, educational leaders need to make sure the learners successfully obtain the skill in the classroom.

Gamification has been known as an option to practice language learning. Numerous games including online multiplayer roleplaying games, exergames, adventure games, tutorial games, and simulation games indicated positive psychological responses and higher learning achievements among students (Hung et al., 2018; Zou, 2020). Additionally, it is evident that gamification increases motivation and engagement as well as reduces learning anxiety among learners across learning language skills (Castillo-Cuesta, 2022; Hung et al., 2018; Suharno et al., 2023; Yavuz et al., 2020). Thus, it is implied that gamification offers essential elements for learners to practice language skills.

While the practice of gamification in EFL classrooms has been done for a long time, the use of online gamification receives significant interest in recent years. This is as a consequence of the high demand for acquiring Information and Communication (ICT) skills and the striking emergence of online and hybrid classrooms. UNESCO (2009) mentioned the ability to convey, keep, generate, share or interchange information" using various technological devices and resources is indispensable in learning in the 21st century (Haryanto, 2021; Pardede, 2020). Not only it is believed that ICT abilities enhance EFL students' academic achievements (Sabiri, 2019), but ICT skills are also stated to allow students to improve their lives even outside the classroom, such as by engaging themselves in the latest world issues and developments (Sabiri, 2019). Therefore, it can be said that practicing online gamification in EFL carries benefits for EFL students both inside and outside the classroom through ICT acquisition.

Previous studies have been conducted in similar disciplines. Ibna Seraj & Rahmatullah (2022) presented a systematic review of the use of smartphone applications in teaching language skills along with the origin of the studies and the methodology. In addition, the researchers concluded their results from 45 studies published between 2010 and early 2020 from Springer, Web of Science, Scopus, and ScienceDirect. The next similar study was employed by Zhang & Hasim (2023). The researchers aimed to review the gamified EFL/ESL instruction in recent studies, specifically the potentials and challenges, as well as the elements. Further, Shortt et al., (2023) summarized the use of the Duolingo application for language learning outcomes, specifically the design issues, implementations, as well as the application's pedagogic utilizations. While the interest in reviewing gamification application(s) has been apparent, the study that aimed to provide a review regarding online gamification platforms for specifically practicing EFL students' reading skills that derived its data from journal

finders of Springer, Taylor & Francis, and Google Scholar that were published between 2012 and 2022 and derived its data from journal finders of ScienceDirect, has not been apparent.

This study aims to provide a review regarding online gamification platforms for practicing EFL students' reading skills. This research used library research method and followed the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guideline developed by Page et al. (2021) to collect and reduce data. Additionally, this study is structured by five elements including introduction, method, findings and discussion, as well as conclusion.

METHOD

This qualitative study is a systematic review that used the library research method following the PRISMA guideline (Page et al., 2021a) that involves data collection and analysis through four steps namely identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion. It is worth mentioning that numerous researchers used the guideline as well (Ibna Seraj & Rahmatullah, 2022; Klimova et al., 2023; Lam & Yunus, 2023; Maristy, 2023). Some tools used for obtaining the research purposes involved are Harzing's Publish or Perish to obtain data from Google Scholar, Microsoft Excel 2016 to identify duplicity, Mendeley Reference Manager to organize the data, and NVIVO 14 software to analyze the data.

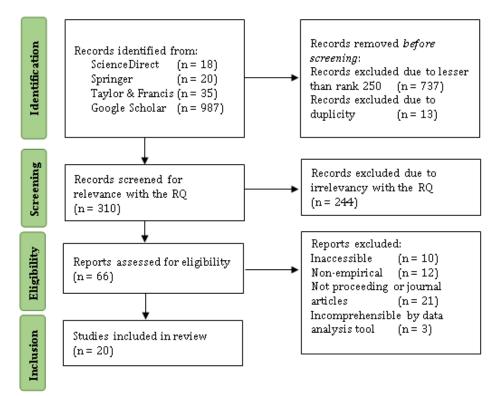


Figure 1: The diagram visualizing the processes of identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion of the study

The flow diagram was adopted from Page et al. (2021b)

Figure 1 visualizes the data collection and analysis involving identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion. As an initial process, the researchers obtain data using the keywords "EFL", "reading skill" "learning", and "online gamification" and filtered to be published between 2012 and 2020. For Springer and Taylor & Francis journal finders, the researchers exported the result items and exported them as CSV files. For ScienceDirect, the researchers exported the files into a RIS file and used Harzing's Publish or Perish to import the RIS files, and finally saved the result as CSV. For Google Scholar, the researchers used Harzing's Publish or Perish to search the studies relevant to the keywords. Then, the researchers saved the results as CSV files. In total, 1060 studies identified originated from ScienceDirect (n = 18), Springer (n = 20), Taylor & Francis (n = 35), and Google Scholar (n = 987). Then, the researchers proceeded to compile all of the results in a Microsoft Excel worksheet. After that, the researchers eliminated studies that have a lesser rank than 250 (n = 737). Next, the researchers excluded studies that indicated duplicity using the Conditional Formatting - Highlight Cell Values - Duplicate Values feature using Microsoft Excel 2016. As a result, 310 studies were carried into the next process.

The researchers, then, continued the screening process. In this stage, the researchers decided to exclude articles that were perceived as irrelevant to answer the question of the study from their titles (n = 244). The next step in assessing the eligibility of 66 studies was employed. As a result, 10 studies were eliminated for inaccessibility (n = 10), non-empirical (n = 12), not identified as proceeding or journal articles (n = 21), and incomprehensibility by NVIVO 14 data analysis software (n = 3). As a result, 20 articles were included as the final data.

The data analysis was employed using NVIVO 14. The researchers coded the articles based on the online gamification platforms that were tested for EFL students in practicing reading. After that, researchers visualized the results using a hierarchy chart for better presentation. As an additional result, the researchers used Microsoft Excel and manually analyzed the education levels, national origins, and methodologies used in each of the articles.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This study aims to provide a review regarding online gamification platforms for practicing EFL students' reading skills from journal finders of ScienceDirect, Springer, Taylor & Francis, and Google Scholar that were published between 2012 - 2022.

Table 1: The context of the articles								
Articles	Education Levels	National Origins	Methodolo gies					
Abarghoui, Masoud Azizi; Taki, Saeed (2018)	Senior high school	Iran	Qualitative					
Al Damen, Tareq Monther (2018)	Higher education	Oman	Mixed					
Al-Khamaiseh, Hadeel Saleh; Al-Jamal, Dina Abdulhameed (2022)	Junior high school	Jordan	Quantitativ e					
Asmara, Candra Hadi; Muhammad, Ribeh Najib; Almubarokah, Qothrunnada (2022)	Higher education	Indonesia	Quantitativ e					
Babaie, Hamed (2022)	Higher education	Iran	Quantitativ e					
Castillo-Cuesta, Luz (2022)	Higher education	Ecuador	Mixed					
Chiang, Hui-Hua (2020)	Higher education	Taiwan	Quantitativ e					
Faya Cerqueiro, Fátima; Martín- Macho Harrison, Ana (2019)	Higher education	Spain	Qualitative					
Freiermuth, Mark R; Ito, Michiyo (2022)	Higher education	Japan	Quantitativ e					
Hakimantieq, Hegar; Suherdi, Didi; Gunawan, Wawan (2022)	Senior high school	Indonesia	Mixed					
Hulse, Robert (2018)	Higher education	Japan	Qualitative					
Korkmaz, Sezen; Öz, Hüseyin (2021)	Higher education	Turkey	Mixed					
Krishnan, Szarmilaa Dewie; Norman, Helmi; Md Yunus, Melor (2021)	Teachers	Malaysia	Mixed					
Priyanti, N.W.I.; Santosa, M.H.; Dewi, K.S. (2019)	Senior high school	Indonesia	Quantitativ e					

Table 1: The context of the articles

Rachman, Dzul; Soviyah, Soviyah; Fajaruddin, Syarief; Pratama, Rio Arif (2020)	Higher education	Indonesia	Quantitativ e	
Ratnasari, Enden; Hikmawati, Rani; Ghifari, Rafi Nizam (2019)	Senior high school	Indonesia	Quantitativ e	
Sa'aleek, Rami Abu; Baniabdelrahman, Abdallah Ahmad (2020)	Elementary school	Jordan	Quantitativ e	
Sánchez-Tello, Martha Cecilia; Argudo-Garzón, Antonio Lenin (2022)	Senior high school	Ecuador	Quantitativ e	
Sewelem Alalwany, Fatmah (2021)	Higher education	Saudi Arabia	Mixed	
Zuhriyah, Siti; Pratolo, Bambang Widi (2020)	Higher education	Indonesia	Qualitative	

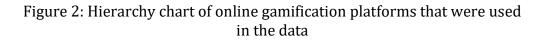
As an additional result, the contexts of the articles such as the involved educational levels, national origins, and methodologies have been visualized in Table 1. It is apparent that regarding the educational context, one article was conducted in elementary school, one in junior high school, five in senior high school, 12 in higher education, and one in a teacher community. Thus, higher education made a popular appearance in the studies.

Regarding the context of the national origins, two articles were conducted in Iran, one in Saudi Arabia, two in Jordan, six in Indonesia, two in Ecuador, one in Taiwan, one, in Spain, two in Japan, one in Turkey, one in Malaysia, and one in Oman. The result implies Indonesia as the most prominent nation to use online gamification platforms for practicing reading skills.

Moreover, Table 1 shows that the articles were conducted as various methodologies. It can be seen that 10 articles used quantitative methodology, four used qualitative methodology, and six used mixed methodology. Thus, it can be said that quantitative methodology placed the highest appearances in the data.

Additionally, even though from the initial stage this study looked for studies published between 2012 and 2022, only articles that were published between 2018 and 2022 were carried as the final data, concerning the criteria had been set such as the article ranks, duplicity, relevance with the research problem, accessibility, empiricism, the articles should be proceeding or journal articles, and comprehensibility by the data analysis tool, NVIVO 14. Three articles

were published in 2018, three were in 2019, four in 2020, three in 2021, and seven in 2022. Thus, the articles were mostly published in 2022.



Gamification Platforms for Practicing EFL Reading							
Kahoot!, 5	Socrative, 2	ReadThe	Quizlet, 1	Padlet, 1			
Quizizz, 4	Memrise, 1	Genially, 1	Duolingo, 1	Classcraft, 1			
	M-reader, 1						
	Into the Book, 1	ClassDojo, 1	ClassDojo, 1 Bibliobattle, 1				

Figure 2 is a hierarchical chart of the online gamification platforms used in the data that was generated using NVIVO 14. The chart shows that five articles involved Kahoot! (Al-Khamaiseh & Al-Jamal, 2022; Chiang, 2020; Hulse, 2018; Korkmaz & Öz, 2021; Rachman et al., 2020), four involved Quizizz (Asmara et al., 2022; Priyanti et al., 2019; Ratnasari et al., 2019; Zuhriyah & Pratolo, 2020), two involved Socrative (Faya Cerqueiro & Martín-Macho Harrison, 2019; Sánchez-Tello & Argudo-Garzón, 2022), one involved Memrise (Abarghoui & Taki, 2018), one involved M-Reader (Al Damen, 2018), one involved Into the Book (Babaie, 2022), one involved ReadTheory.org (Sewelem Alalwany, 2021), one involved Genially (Castillo-Cuesta, 2022), one involved ClassDojo (Sa'aleek & Baniabdelrahman, 2020), one involved Quizlet (Hulse, 2018), one Involved Duolingo (Hakimantieg et al., 2022), one involved Padlet (Sánchez-Tello & Argudo-Garzón, 2022), one involved Classcraft (Krishnan et al., 2021), and one involved Bibliobattle (Freiermuth & Ito, 2022). It can be concluded that Kahoot! and Quizizzwere the most used online gamification platforms to practice EFL reading skills.

As Kahoot! and Quizizz were identified as the most popular platforms to be used for practicing EFL reading skills, the researchers would elaborate brief explanations of both platforms.

The use of Kahoot! in EFL classrooms has been making significant appearances in recent years. The platform is a free response system platform that allows users to attain gamified experiences, accompanied by graphics, sounds, points, and competitive rank (Alawadhi & Abu-Ayyash, 2021; Artati, 2021; Chiang, 2020). In Kahoot!, users are offered with quiz-like display and involved themselves in a fun, engaging, and competitive environment. The users, then, collect points and finally show their ranks on a leaderboard (Ahmed et al., 2022). Additionally, the popularity of the platform was marked by 70 million active users worldwide in 2019 (Alawadhi & Abu-Ayyash, 2021). In brief, Kahootl's enjoyable nature and free of charge make it a favorable platform for EFL classrooms for many instructors.

In the EFL reading classroom, Kahoot! was proven to be a favorable option among students (Al-Khamaiseh & Al-Jamal, 2022; Chiang, 2020; Hulse, 2018; Korkmaz & Öz, 2021). Most importantly, it appeared that the use of Kahoot! can increase students' reading achievements in class (Korkmaz & Öz, 2021; Rachman et al., 2020). The studies implied that Kahoot! platform was recommended to be used in practicing reading skills.

Quizizz is an online gamified platform that offers a fun, interactive, and engaging experience to users. It can be accessed through smartphones and laptops. Quizizz displays colorful multiple-choice questions while accompanying users with music, avatars, and memes to enhance learning motivation and experience (Maryo & Pujiastuti, 2022; Zuhriyah & Pratolo, 2020). The popularity of Quizizz is marked by reaching millions of active users that were in 2022 w mainly teachers and students across various subjects (Maryo & Pujiastuti, 2022). Moreover, the use of Quizizz is often linked with higher students' enthusiasm and motivation (Andresta & Anwar, 2022; Basuki & Hidayati, 2019; Yan mei et al., 2018). Thus, the fun, engaging, and easy-toaccess characteristics of Quizizz makes it preferred by teachers in their classroom.

In teaching EFL reading, it was found that Quizizz was perceived by students as an interesting tool that leveraged students' confidence during learning, motivating, and positively correlated with their reading skills (Zuhriyah & Pratolo, 2020). It was also tested that Quizizz successfully improved students' reading skills (Asmara et al., 2022; Priyanti et al., 2019; Ratnasari et al., 2019). Thus, it can be said that not only it received positive attitudes among students, Quizizz showed positive results in its implementation for practicing EFL reading skills.

CONCLUSION

This study aims to provide a review regarding online gamification platforms for practicing EFL students' reading skills. This research found that there are numerous options for online gamification platforms for practicing EFL students' reading skills, namely Kahoot!, Quizizz, Socrative, Bibliobattle, ClassCraft, ClassDojo, Duolingo, Genially, Into the Book, M-reader, Memrise,

Padlet, Quizlet, and ReadTheory.org. Kahoot! and Quizizz were the most used platforms for practicing EFL students' reading skills. This research contributes to EFL teaching and learning discipline, specifically in practicing reading skills better. Limitation such as technical mastery in data collection and analysis was undeniable. Consequently, the researchers recommend future studies to use more sophisticated data collection and analysis tools to provide more comprehensive results.

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