

Research Article

READO-GRAM 2.0: Learning Reading Skills Through Games

Sitti Hawa Sheikh Mohammad¹, Azlan Yusof Punding², and Nur Ain Abu Bakar³

¹ Academy of Language Studies, UiTM Sarawak Branch, Mukah Campus; sitti5421@uitm.edu.my  ORCID ID (register at <https://orcid.org/>)

² Academy of Contemporary Islamic Studies, UiTM Sarawak Branch, Mukah Campus; azlanyusof@uitm.edu.my  ORCID ID 0009-0009-6252-6191

³ Faculty of Accountancy, UiTM Sarawak Branch, Mukah Campus; ain736@uitm.edu.my;  ORCID ID 0000-0002-1546-3695

* Correspondence: sitti5421@uitm.edu.my; 014-6499287.

Abstract: In the present day, there is a call for innovation in teaching and learning, and learning languages is no exception. Students nowadays are technologically advanced, so they crave for a learning experience that is fun and engaging. So, for teachers, the use of gamification or game-based learning has garnered an interest due to its easy-to-navigate features, interesting interface, and the gaming element itself; the borrowing of certain gaming principles and applying it to real-life settings to engage users. READO-GRAM 2.0 is a game-based application that lets students answer reading comprehension questions in a fun and engaging way. It is student-paced; questions appear at each of the screen. Then, students answer the questions at the given time, and they get to review the questions at the end of each quiz. Moreover, students can also view memes and collect power-ups so that these power-ups can be used to answer certain questions they missed or answered wrongly. They can play READO-GRAM 2.0 via laptops, computers, smartphones, or tablets. Read-o-quiz can be played by students ranging from secondary schools, university students, or even professionals taking English language courses. READO-GRAM 2.0 is free and can be accessible freely by those who need it. It can be used by students and instructor/teacher/lecturer of secondary schools, universities, and professionals taking English language courses.

Keywords: English language learning; Game-based Learning; Gamification; Reading Comprehension.



Copyright: © 2023 by the authors. Submitted for open access publication under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

1. INTRODUCTION

Gamification, or game-based learning, has garnered an interest with educators and students worldwide. There are many game-based applications out there that caters with student's and educator's interest: Genially, kahoot, Quizizz, Quizzlet, etc. However, gamification, or game-based learning, is not seen as a teaching method that will replace conventional, instructional-based method. It is seen as a supplementary or a mixture of conventional, with the element of gaming to engage student's interest and attention span in the classroom, be it offline or online. What is game-based learning? Game-based learning is where the elements and characteristics of games are embedded in learning (Tophat, 2021). Components of game-based learning includes leaderboard, power-ups, discussion boards, interactive online quizzes, badges, etc. The students can even collect points and these points can be used as an added value in their assessments. In terms of reading comprehension, the key factor to remember is that online games and gaming experiences can be a wonderful way to enhance

foundational reading skills. It is not meant to replace teaching or teacher engagement with students around course material (Lynch, 2017). Students are excited interacting with each other, using the technology and the format that they are comfortable with. All these elements make game-based learning fun and engaging.

The purpose of this research is to investigate student's perception of using READO-GRAM 2.0 as one of the tools for reading comprehension. For this, there are two (2) areas investigated, game's interface and student's expectation.

2. METHOD & MATERIAL

This research involved diploma students who were taking ELC151 (Integrated Language Skills 2) in semester two (March-July 2023). Students who were involved in this study were those enrolling in Diploma in Business Studies and Diploma in Banking. For this semester, there were 143 students taking Diploma in Business Administration, and 196 students taking Diploma in Banking. However, for the purpose of this study, only 87 students (69 students from Diploma in Business Studies and 18 students from Diploma in Business) were taking part in the survey because these respondents were taught by the same lecturer. This research was conducted for 4 weeks in June 2023. During those 4 weeks, the students were exposed to READO-GRAM 2.0, a reading comprehension games developed by the lecturer via Quizizz, an online education games platform, and these games were used interchangeably in every class. There were five games developed in READO-GRAM 2.0; facts vs opinions, identifying supporting details, identifying topic sentences, contextual clues, and reference words.

On the 5th week, the students were required to fill in a survey. There were 13 items asked, and these items were designed using Likert scale (1-disagree, 2-not sure, 3-agree). These items were divided into two (2) instruments; game interface (5 items) and student's expectation (3 items). The questionnaire items were adapted and modified from Masrom (2006).

The survey was constructed using Google Form, and the link was shared via classes' WhatsApp groups. Out of 87 students who've partaken in this survey, the lecturer only managed to obtain 74 responses. The data was analysed using SPSS 25.0. The results were presented using percentage, mean, and standard deviation.

3. FINDINGS

The findings will be discussed were game's interface and student's expectation, which is shown as follow;

3.1 *Game's Interface*

Table 1. Game's Interface

No.	Statement	Disagree (1)	Not sure (2)	Agree (3)	Mean	Std. Dev.
1.	Menus available in the Read-O- Quiz are easy to understand	4.1%	13.5 %	82.4 %	2.78	.50 3
2.	Navigation and drop-down menus are easy to use	1.4%	17.6 %	81.1 %	2.79	.43 7
3.	Multimedia elements in the games are interesting	1.4%	4.1 %	94.5 %	2.93	.30 2
4.	I just need a very short time to know how the game is functioning	1.4%	8.1 %	90.5 %	2.89	.35 3

From the data above, 82.4% of the respondents agreed that the menus available in the READO-GRAM 2.0 were easy to understand, while 81.1% agreed that navigations and drop-down menus were easy to understand. In terms of its multimedia elements, 94.5% agreed that the multimedia elements in the games were interesting, as 90.5% of the respondents only needed a very short time to know how the game was functioning. As for the colour and design layout, 95.9% of the respondents viewed that the use of colour and design layout in the games were interesting.

3.2 Student's Perception

Table 2. Student's Perception

No	Statement	Disagree (1)	Not sure (2)	Agree (3)	Mean	Std. Dev.
1.	I wish to have more opportunities to learn English using game-based approach	2.7%	5.4 %	91.9 %	2.89	.39 0
2.	I prefer using online games like READO-GRAM 2.0 learn English compared to traditional method in class	2.7%	20.3 %	77%	2.74	.49 8
3	I would like to learn all English subjects using online games	1.4%	16.2 %	82.4 %	2.81	.42 7

4. DISCUSSION

This study suggested that students showed high interest in using READO-GRAM 2.0 in answering reading comprehension questions. The students regarded that READO-GRAM 2.0 gave them a lot of benefits and made learning reading comprehension more interesting. Moreover, students found that with online games like READO-GRAM 2.0, they can learn reading comprehension at their own pace, and it gave them more flexibility to choose their learning place and learning time. Online games helped them in their cognitive development, as they helped them to think critically, challenge their understanding on the subject learnt, and encourage them to participate in the activities held online. Moreover, students were attracted with the interactive colour and design layout, and this gives them a motivation to use online games to improve themselves in learning English. Moreover, almost all of students are post-millennials, so they have no problems navigating the navigations and drop-down menus. Finally, almost all of the students preferred using online games to learn English compared to traditional methods in class.

Based on the students' perceptions, the researcher highly encourages for educators to expand the study of using online games to learn reading comprehension accordingly. This is because students find online games as a breath of fresh air learning English, whether is in the classroom or at the comfort of their home., 96% of male primary and secondary students play computer games while 90% female claimed to do so (Rubijesmin, 2007). She also indicated that most Malaysian students are familiar with many genres of computer games and playing games also encourages social skills among the students. Online games give problem-solving experience to students and provide situated experience in which students are involved in complex problem-solving tasks (Ince, 2018).

This research has its limitations. Firstly, the sample size is not an ideal sample size as only 87 students participated in the survey, which is small compared to an ideal sample size (roughly 150 respondents and above). These students are taking various diploma programmes in UiTM Mukah.

Secondly, it is only done to in UiTM Mukah. All these instruments do not necessarily represent the responses of all undergraduate students, regardless of location, programmes, and learning preferences. Thirdly, the researcher only looks into only one online game: Quizizz. Due to that, the result is only narrowed down based on the usage of Quizizz in answering reading comprehension questions. It is hope that further research is conducted on this, with bigger sample size and more online education games being exposed to students.

5. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, online games have a promising approach to enrich learning methods in higher learning institutions, that depend heavily on traditional teaching method. Hopefully, this research can provide better understanding in incorporating online education games in teaching and learning, especially in the higher learning institution scenario in Malaysia.

Acknowledgments: The author dedicated this study to lecturers and students of UiTM Sarawak Branch, Mukah Campus in contributing to writing this paper.

References

- Cahill, G. (2021). Why Game-Based Learning? The Learning Counsel. <https://thelearningcounsel.com/article/why-game-based-learning>
- Game Based Learning. (n.d.). Top Hat. Retrieved August 2, 2021, from <https://tophat.com/glossary/g/game-based-learning/>
- Ince, E. Y. (2018). Educational Games in Higher Education. Simulation and Gaming. doi 10.5772/intechopen.71017
- Rubijesmin, A. L. (2007). Understanding Malaysian students as gamers: Experience. Paper presented at the Proceedings of the 2nd International Conference on Digital interactive Media in Entertainment and Arts Perth, Australia.