

Pre-Service English Teachers' Insights on Using Zep Quiz as a Learning Tool in EFL Classrooms

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Abstract

This study investigates the perspectives of pre-service English teachers on the use of Zep Quiz in the context of EFL (English as a Foreign Language) instruction. Along with the development towards the digital era, integrating technology in educational settings is crucial, especially for future educators looking to employ technology based methods to create engaging and appealing lessons. Employing a qualitative approach with exploratory descriptive methods, this study examines English education students at UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya who implemented Zep Quiz during their internship teaching practice. Data collection involved semi-structured interviews, observations, and documentation, followed by thematic analysis. Findings reveal that Zep Quiz was user friendly and effective in enhancing student motivation and engagement. Gamification features such as scoring and leaderboards fostered a competitive and enjoyable learning environment. However, challenges related to technological limitations were also found, such as connectivity issues and device limitations among students. The study highlights the importance of teacher education focusing on technology mastery and classroom management skills to address such challenges. The results are anticipated to influence pre-service English teacher education programs, particularly in the integration of technology in EFL instruction.

Keywords: Zep Quiz; Pre-Service English Teachers; Game-Based Learning

INTRODUCTION

In today's digital society, integrating technology into education, including language instruction, is essential. Educators, particularly pre-service ones, should not only be familiar with teaching materials and methodologies but also adept at utilizing various digital resources to develop interactive learning experiences that cater to the current students' preferences. Nurhidayat (2024) emphasizes that 21st century education focuses on critical thinking, problem solving, creativity, and social skills rather than rote memorization to not only prepare students ready for exams but to prepare them for life. In agreement, Erdoğan (2019) argue that integrating technology into the teaching learning process particularly in EFL is crucial for equipping learners with the skills needed for professional growth. Technology is seen as a valuable tool to enhance language learning by providing authentic context for practice, facilitating group collaboration and social interactions, promoting learner autonomy and motivation. Consequently, educators must possess proficiency in using technology to effectively integrate it into the EFL classroom for optimal outcomes.

Teachers need to know how to choose and customize the appropriate technology, create effective learning experiences with it, troubleshoot technical issues, and help students develop good habits for using digital tools. Moorhouse & Yan (2023) further asserts that integration of technology into the teaching of English language offers numerous advantages like acquisition of skills, greater participation in classroom activities, meeting the diversity needs, higher

motivation level among others as well as have done of bilingualism and academic accomplishments with more parental involvement in the student learning process. Suherdi (2012) says that Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is the key to enhance quality of English teachers and learners in 21 Century as ICT can speed up the process of knowledge transfer from teacher to student.

In English as a Foreign Language (EFL), various strategies are commonly employed to support students in developing language skills. The Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach focuses on authentic communication in real world situations (Richards, J.C & Rodgers, T.S., 2014). Task Based Language Teaching (TBLT) emphasizes doing authentic task to stimulate natural language use (Ellis, R, 2009). In addition, the CLIL method is taught alongside other types of content so students get double profit (Busse, 2012). Some situations continue to be influenced by a Grammar-Translation Method which may be seen as more time-honoured (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011). Alongside technology development, novel blended learning and technology enhanced learning approaches can become relevant which combine real as well as virtual classroom lessons (Pho & Dinscore, 2015).

Game-based learning for teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) has been growing in popularity. By employing games in the learning, students are motivated and focused to learn more as well as for better product of learning with different settings. Games can act to maintain student interest in the learning process and increase their engagement, as expressed by Reinhardt (2019). Boctor (2013) describes the game-based learning as a way of assisting with the learning process in two stages. First, motivating students to use knowledge from different fields of study when making decisions. Second, allowing student to see how decision can impact on the result of a game which motivate them to reflect and for see. In addition, in the context of game, the interactions bring both discussion and cooperation which can help students form some skills on coordination and being socialized. Consistent with these, Adipat (2021) also said that it can motivate students to be more active and interactive in learning since through game-based learning student could share information, do tasks together, and solved problems which require him/her to cooperation. Although not necessarily superior to other methods of learning in terms of academic performance, Pho & Dinscore (2015) indicated that the approach holds promise by enhancing student motivation and interest in content. This is also correlated with current teaching trends, which focus on games and gamification, teacher education towards digital literacy competences and the exploitation of digital tools for hybrid, online instruction particularly in a post pandemic era.

In light of this, it is crucial to gain a deeper understanding of various digital learning tools along with their strengths and weaknesses. One of the popular interactive learning tools that becomes more and more interesting is Zep Quiz. Zep Quiz is an online quiz platform where users or teachers can create interactive quizzes with different question types, including multiple choice questions, short answer questions and image based questions. This is the platform that believes learning should be fun, competitive and active engaging students both in real time in class as well as during homework. Zep Quiz isn't as feature rich as competitors like Kahoot or Quizizz, but has a much cleaner and easy to use interface so users know how to use it within seconds of being on the web site. This game-based approach (gamification) incorporated in Zep Quiz can advance a competitive but fun learning environment that might somehow influence students' motivation and interest towards learning.

According to Downey (2008), in this research, "insight" refers to pre-service English teachers' profound understanding of Zep Quiz's learning benefits, limitations, and challenges. The goal is for this knowledge to be both descriptive and analytical, enabling future educators to grasp how technology can enhance English language learning. Pre-service English teachers need to learn how a technology can actually facilitate the process of learning English. As a result, insight is not simply an impression or first-time-understanding but signifies the beginning teacher's

ability to intertwine experience based knowledge with more general pedagogic theory. In line with this, Kounios & Beeman (2014) explains that insight isn't merely experiencing something but also involves reflection, critical thought, and devising specific recommendations from actual experiences. In the case of Zep Quiz, this implies that teachers should not only consider the degree of ease in use or visual appeal when evaluating what an application can offer both to their students' language development and learning motivation, but that they also need to establish for themselves how it will help them achieve their specific aims. That is to say, insight represents a metacognitive thinking skill that integrates lived experiences and teaching knowledges with the larger context of the classroom. Thus, an examination of the opinions of pre-service English teachers will assist not only in getting a general understanding and perspectives on Zep Quiz, but also offers opportunities for practical implications to design teacher training programs and innovative teaching strategies in this digital era.

Most research has focused on examining the use of digital quiz tools in language learning, particularly within the context of pre-service teacher education. According to Lim & Yunus, (2021), educators have shown a high level of enthusiasm for Quizizz due to its user-friendly interface, motivational aspects, and its effectiveness in enhancing student engagement. However, challenges related to technical issues, such as connectivity issues, have been noted. In line with findings of the study conducted by Setyaningrum & Putri (2023) discovered that future educators display a positive attitude towards integrating Quizizz into their teaching practices, even going as far as incorporating it into their lesson plans. Another study that was made by Maharani (2025) revealed that an applied group of pre-service teachers scored KAHOOT! as a playful interactive tool, although it is still technically limited. In contrast, Colomo Magaña (2024) emphasize that practical exposure is more beneficial for aspiring teachers in terms of gamification preparation. In addition, Stakhova (2024) underscore the significance of enhancing the digital competencies of future educators, as it greatly influences their ability to utilize technology driven educational tools effectively. Additionally, a general review found that interactive quiz platforms like Kahoot! and Quizizz are widely preferred by both teachers and students for their ability to boost motivation and participation. Pho & Dinscore (2015) point out that limited infrastructure can pose a barrier to the successful implementation of digital quizzes in language learning. These insights indicate a positive reception towards integrating digital quizzes into language education, while also emphasizing the importance of further exploring the perceptions of potential EFL teacher candidates towards innovative platforms within an EFL classroom setting.

There are many studies about the effectiveness of quiz applications for students but this issue for pre-service English teachers is less considered. Research on the attitude and capability of pre-service English teachers' perception and readiness in using a digital tool, such as Zep Quiz, is also still lacking. In reality, fewer articles or academic papers explicitly written about the practice of Zep Quiz in teaching EFL exist compared to those reporting about other quiz platforms like Kahoot! or Quizizz. This article seeks to fill in this gap by providing both theoretical literature which forms the basis of this paper and empirical evidence from future English teachers. This matters, because the ideas of future teachers can affect how they teach. As a new breed of teachers, they will have to meet the challenges and opportunities in a rapidly changing environment. Thus, the purpose of this research is to investigate pre-service English teachers' perceptions about Zep Quiz and how they perceive its benefits, challenges, practical applications in EFL classrooms.

The study will address the following inquiries:

1. How do pre-service English teachers assess the effectiveness of utilizing Zep Quiz to enhance students' skills in solving riddles?
2. What impact does Zep Quiz have on students' motivation and interest in learning the English language?

3. What obstacles and challenges exist when incorporating Zep Quiz in EFL classes?
4. How can Zep Quiz be effectively integrated into Indonesian EFL classrooms according to pre-service English teachers?

The study aims to add to the literature on using digital tools in EFL instruction. Theoretically, the study is hoped to contribute to a better understanding of how interactive learning tools could be used in English language teaching. Theoretically, the findings of this study are hopefully able to contribute conceptually on tools election and integration as Zep Qz in teaching learning process for future teachers, lecture at LPTK (Teachers' Training Institution), and practitioners of language learning in selecting and integrating Zep Quiz tool in learning process. Therefore, it is the goal of this research to not just report on the experiences of preservice teachers, but to shed some much needed light into how technology can be used to promote teaching and learning EFL. By developing a deeper understanding of these tools, pre-service English teachers can effectively address current teaching challenges and utilize technology more efficiently.

METHOD

This study adopts a qualitative research methodology with an exploratory descriptive approach to investigate the perspectives, attitudes, and experiences of pre-service English teachers regarding the use of Zep Quiz as a learning tool in EFL (English as Foreign Language) classrooms. According to Hunter & McCallum (2019), by using an exploratory descriptive approach allows researchers to explore topics with limited coverage in the literature and allows study participants to contribute to the development of new knowledge in the field. Holloway & S. Wheeler (2010) argues that descriptions of phenomena provide a detailed picture from the participants' perspectives. The purpose of a descriptive study is to document and describe the phenomenon of interest. The participant selected for this study is a student enrolled in an English education program at UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya, chosen purposively due to their direct experience in utilizing Zep Quiz during classroom teaching in an internship setting. The primary research instrument employed is a semi-structured interview designed to gather detailed insights on participants' perceptions of the ease of use, effectiveness, student engagement, and instructional potential of Zep Quiz in language learning. Data collection involves recorded interviews, direct classroom observations, and analysis of relevant documents. Thematic analysis is utilized to identify patterns and interpretive codes that address key research questions. The validity of the data is ensured through triangulation of sources (interviews, observations, and documentation) and methods to establish consistency in results.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Impact on Learning Effectiveness

The majority of respondents indicated that Zep Quiz helped for students understanding and mastering vocabulary, as well as supported their reading. All of them considered that the interesting interface and time-based game system could improve student attention in learning. The question-and-answer format helped students pay attention and give their own answers efficiently. But some respondents also noted that students appeared to be valuing speed over accuracy, or comprehension of course material. Participant 3 stated,

“Students focus more on who answers faster, not on the correct answer.”
(P3).

These results indicate a pedagogical trade-off between the advantages of competition, which stimulate student interest, and disintegrations of depth that could occur. For language learning, competitions, particularly one that is speed based, could drive students to purely think of the goal or end result and fail to really meditate on meaning of words or context of reading. For that reason teachers must align motivational game elements with cognitive objectives in order to put a stress on conceptual understanding.

In addition, participants focused that Zep Quiz works better in practice stage and after teaching allocated an hour to material. Participant 1 agreed and said,

"This media is only suitable for practicing questions after delivering the material."

(P1)

This suggests that Zep Quiz is better suited to practicing understanding by repetition, and light testing of it, instead of being used as the tool for teaching new ideas. The app is a complementary tool here, that teachers can probably use in order to assess students' understanding on the fly and at the same time make the learning process fun. It's basically review and drill as opposed to exposing them to new things that need lots of explanation on a conceptual or topical level.

Impact on Language Skills

Regarding the impact of Zep Quiz on language skills, they stated that Zep Quiz was more effective in terms of vocabulary mastery compared to other aspects of language skills. This is due to the activities used in the app, which require students to recognize, understand, and remember the meaning of words in specific contexts. Participant 4 emphasized,

"For grammar, it doesn't really help."

(P4)

This suggests that sentence structure and grammar were not the primary focus of the quiz questions, as they focused more on sentence comprehension than on applying complex grammatical forms. In comparison, on vocabulary, participants noted that students were more encouraged to look up unfamiliar vocabulary through the quiz questions in order to answer them correctly and quickly. This inquiry-based strategy was considered to have a positive effect on vocabulary learning. Some participants also believed the app could help develop skimming skills, as students needed to quickly grasp the gist of the question before providing an answer to some extent. However, its contribution to improving listening and speaking skills was limited due to the Zep Quiz format's preference for multiple-choice, gap-filling, and short-response questions.

Student Motivation and Engagement

Participants noted that Zep Quiz consistently boosted students' motivation and engagement compared to traditional methods. They found that students learned better and were more enthusiastic when using the app. A student described the app as visually appealing and interactive, while another highlighted how the competitive aspect motivated active participation. Participant 2 said,

"Students are very enthusiastic because the display is attractive and game-based,"

(P2)

while Participant 5 added, *"The competitive feature makes students more enthusiastic about participating."*

(P5)

The visual effects, interactivity, and competitive nature of Zep Quiz were key factors that significantly influenced students' motivation to learn. Students found inspiration not only from achieving high scores but also from the enjoyable and gamified learning process.

Technical and Pedagogical Constraints

When it comes to Zep Quiz, while it offers significant benefits for learning, there are technical and pedagogical challenges to address. Issues such as limited devices, poor connectivity, and maintaining stable classroom management are significant obstacles. As expressed by Participant 3, some students exhibited overwhelming enthusiasm, leading to new challenges in classroom management. One participant mentioned that while the class became enjoyable, controlling the energetic students proved to be a bit challenging.

"The class became more fun, but it was a bit difficult to control because the students were too enthusiastic."

(P3)

This situation demonstrates the importance of considering emotional and social factors when using gamification in the classroom to prevent students from becoming overly competitive and losing focus on the true learning objectives. Educators must maintain balance through clear rules, setting the pace of activities, and considering both collaboration and competition to ensure effective classroom management.

Technically, some students are unable to participate due to device issues or connectivity problems. P1 explained,

"There are students who can't participate because their cellphones are having problems or the signal is bad."

(P1)

This highlights the ongoing digital disparity in education, particularly in schools with limited resources. Unequal access to infrastructure and technical assistance sometimes forces teachers to rely on students' personal devices for participation.

Apart from technical constraints, participants expressed that pedagogical limitations were also important. They sensed that, however interactive and engaged Zep Quiz was, it would not be on measure with traditional tests that are much more formal and comprehensive and at depth.

"Zep Quiz cannot replace traditional tests, because it is more fun."

(P4)

This perspective indicates that Zep Quiz is best used as a formative assessment tool to gauge student understanding during the learning process, rather than as a summative assessment tool for comprehensive analysis.

Implementation Strategy and Recommendations

In addition to outlining the advantages and limitations of Zep Quiz, participants shared strategic recommendations for its implementation in English learning. They suggested using the application post-teaching stage for practice and ice-breaking. Participant 2 recommended,

"It is more suitable to use after the material is finished for practice."

(P2)

This highlights that Zep Quiz is most effective as a reinforcement tool rather than the primary mode for introducing new content. By incorporating it at the end of lessons, teachers can engage students in reviewing what they've learned, ensuring high levels of engagement. Moreover, participants emphasized the importance of aligning the question difficulty with students' capabilities. Participant 5 stressed,

"The questions must be adjusted to the students' level so that everyone can participate."

(P5)

This underscores the need for differentiated instruction, adjusting the content and complexity of questions to provide all students with an equal opportunity to participate. Mismatched difficulty levels can lead to student frustration or lack of motivation, hindering collaborative learning objectives.

Additionally, participants expressed a desire for the development of new features such as question-based listening tools and detailed learning outcome reports. Participant 3 remarked, *"If there were listening features and detailed reports, it would definitely be more useful."* (P3)

These recommendations reflect a desire for more comprehensive features, including question-based listening comprehension and detailed progress reports, to support teachers in evaluating student learning and progress effectively.

Discussion

The results of this study indicate that pre-service English teachers viewed the use of Zep Quiz as an effective learning tool, particularly in supporting vocabulary mastery and increasing student motivation. This finding aligns with the view of Mrissa & Anasse (2024), who stated that digital quiz platforms such as Kahoot and Quizizz can strengthen vocabulary retention through interactive and enjoyable learning. In the context of this study, the game elements and time challenges in Zep Quiz appeared to encourage students to recall and understand word meanings more quickly. This indicates that gamification can function as a stimulus that strengthens cognitive processes in language acquisition. However, participants also noted that the use of Zep Quiz is not optimal for teaching grammar. Students tended to focus on speed of answering rather than accuracy of sentence structure. This finding supports research by Aini (2024), who asserted that digital quizzes are more effective in developing lexical skills than grammatical ones. Therefore, the implication is that teachers need to combine the use of Zep Quiz with explicit or text-based learning strategies to develop a deeper understanding of language structure.

In addition to the effectiveness of learning, increased student motivation and engagement were also important findings from this study. Participants assessed that the attractive presentation, points system, and competitive elements in Zep Quiz significantly contributed to increasing student enthusiasm for learning. This phenomenon is consistent with the findings of Le & Tran (2024), who showed that gamification can strengthen students' intrinsic motivation by fostering enjoyment and enthusiasm during learning. In this context, Zep Quiz serves not only as an evaluation tool but also as a medium capable of creating a more meaningful learning experience. However, on the other hand, excessive enthusiasm can pose challenges in classroom management, as Baah (2024) also noted that strong competitive elements sometimes shift students' focus from academic goals to the game aspect. Thus, teachers need to balance competition and academic reflection, for example by providing feedback after quizzes or reviewing incorrect answers to strengthen conceptual understanding.

The technical constraints encountered in this study, such as limited devices and unstable internet connections, reflect the reality commonly encountered in educational contexts in developing countries. This issue was also identified by Stakhova (2024), who emphasized that teachers' digital readiness and technological infrastructure support are crucial factors in the successful implementation of ICT in language learning. Therefore, the success of Zep Quiz is determined not only by teachers' pedagogical skills but also by the readiness of school facilities and infrastructure. From a pedagogical perspective, participants assessed that Zep Quiz cannot replace formal evaluations, but rather serves as a complement to formative monitoring of student understanding. This view is consistent with the findings of Suryani (2012) research, which states that information technology in education should be used as a learning aid and not as a substitute for conventional methods with a deep evaluative function. Consequently, teachers need to understand the limits of technology's role in learning and use it proportionately, in accordance with the desired learning objectives. In terms of implementation strategies, pre-service English teachers suggested using Zep Quiz in the post-teaching phase as a medium for

practice or review of material. This view aligns with Agus (2023) research, which states that gamification is most effective when applied during the review phase to strengthen students' understanding of the material presented. Adjusting the difficulty level of questions is also important, as reflected in the principle of differentiated instruction, which emphasizes the need to tailor learning activities to students' abilities and needs. Furthermore, several participants proposed developing additional features, such as listening-based questions and more detailed learning outcome reports. These suggestions demonstrate teachers' need for more comprehensive evaluative data to support reflection and improvement of the learning process. The results of this study also conclude that pre-service English teachers' pedagogical readiness and digital literacy play a crucial role in the successful implementation of technologies such as Zep Quiz in EFL classrooms. As Colomo Magaña (2024) emphasized, hands-on experience using gamification can increase teachers' confidence and readiness to integrate technology effectively. Therefore, teacher education institutions need to provide training that emphasizes not only technical skills but also aspects of technology-based learning design and classroom management. Such training will help pre-service English teachers understand how to balance engaging technology use with achieving substantive learning objectives. Overall, this discussion confirms that the use of Zep Quiz has significant potential to support English language learning when implemented in a planned manner and accompanied by adequate technical and pedagogical preparation. Technology cannot completely replace the role of teachers, but it can enrich the learning experience when used strategically to increase student motivation, engagement, and vocabulary mastery within a meaningful learning context.

CONCLUSION

The study suggests that Zep Quiz has the potential to serve as a learning tool, enhancing students' motivation and their engagement in English activities, particularly in vocabulary acquisition. However, the app's limitations in fostering listening and speaking skills position it more as an evaluative tool rather than a formative one. The importance of pedagogical preparedness for the effective integration of educational technology is underscored, especially for pre-service English teachers. This research sheds light on pre-service English teachers' perspectives on the readiness to integrate technology among elementary education candidates. Furthermore, it emphasizes the necessity for future research to explore classroom management techniques and the integration of gamification in EFL.

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