USING GAME-BASED LEARNING TOOL TO ENGAGE YOUNG LEARNERS IN THE EFL ONLINE CLASSROOMS

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Abstract: Online English classes are common occurrences during this Covid-19 Pandemic. Nevertheless, teaching English online for young learners is quite challenging. The learners need to focus their attention on the lesson presented on a small screen at certain time frame and they cannot move a lot during the online session. This situation can make those young learners get bored and demotivated. Harmer (2012) mentioned that children have short attention span and they cannot concentrate on the same thing for a long time. To make the learning atmosphere more engaging for children, the teacher shall make the lesson interesting, lively and fun (Brown, 2007). Based on these backgrounds, researchers tried to create more engaging online class atmosphere by integrating Quizizz in the learning activities. As mentioned by Sato (2019), Quizizz is one of the most engaging online tools for language classrooms because it helps students enjoy learning. This research aims to analyze the use of Quizizz in engaging students of General English for Young Learners online classes, grade 5 and grade 6. The data are obtained from observation, questionnaire and interview. The results showed positive perception from the students toward Quizizz and Quizizz integration also encouraged students’ engagement in online classroom.

Keywords: young learners, online learning, game-based learning tool

INTRODUCTION
Since the global spread of corona virus, there have been significant changes everywhere. Companies implement work from home (WFH), social interaction on daily basis is limited under certain health protocols, and online learning becomes common occurrences in all levels of educations. People make adjustments, adapt to new situations and necessitate flexibility so as to keep abreast with all possible new trends. As for the online learning platform, a myriad of strategies and techniques of instructions are carefully planned by teachers to encourage students’ active involvement in the learning process. Teachers begin to utilize technology which includes video conferences, learning videos, and fun educational games. There are considerable points to take into account when making decision and selection regarding the applications of technology and its helpful learning tools. This quite frequently involves consideration in regards to learners’ age.

Teaching English online, particularly for young learners, is definitely another challenge. Learners need to focus their attention on the lesson presented on a small screen at certain time frame. In addition, they cannot move a lot during the online session. Teachers shall be more creative in providing more engaging materials and activities. Harmer (2012) stated that although children are enthusiastic learners, they have short attention span and cannot concentrate on the same thing for a long time. However, they can learn well from doing things through play and action in a warm and engaging environment. Brown (2007) added that in order to make the learning atmosphere more purposeful and more engaging for children, teachers need to make the lesson interesting, lively and fun. If the learning session is enjoyable, then it will be memorable for students so that the language involved will stick (Philips, 1993). Students will have a sense of achievement and it will develop their motivation for further setting. It will generate students’ a positive attitude towards learning English. Children can learn a lot more than English
in their English classes as the tasks and activities stimulate and continue their all-round development. Linse and Nunan (2005) stated that we must tailor teaching experience to meet students' needs in teaching English for Young Learners. Teachers need to be familiar with our students first in order to understand our students' development. Teachers need to know what they find interesting and motivating. By knowing what interests our students, teachers will be able to create engaging and motivating English lessons.

Balwant (2018) defined student engagement as highly activated and pleasurable emotional, behavioural, and cognitive involvement in academic activities. Three components are always present when a student is engaged: attention, persistence and commitment (Schlechty, 2011). The student is attentive to the task because he or she finds personal meaning and value in the task; the student sees the task as responding to motives and values brought to the work. Furthermore, the student persists with the task even when he or she experiences difficulty and does not compromise personal standards for completion of the task and possess the ability to negotiate at a lower standard when he or she wants to. Thus, there lies student’s commitment to the work and moral value on its completion.

Mackenzie (2014) reported that by promoting students’ engagement, teachers helped students reflect on their classroom roles, and ultimately improve their performance and acquisition of skills. Similarly, Mulia (2020) found out that EFL students could get better learning outcomes by being engaged positively in online language learning platforms. The students showed high results in four aspects of engagement including behavioral, emotional, participation and cognitive engagement. Leah Taylor And Jim Parsons (2011) have suggested five aspects that can support student-engaging classrooms: (1) learning that is real and relevant, (2) technology-rich learning environments, (3) positive, challenging, and open learning climates, (4) respectful relationships among students and teachers and (5) a culture of learning – teachers are learning with students.

Recently, game-based learning had been used as an effort to increase student engagement. Game-based Learning (GBL) combines subject matter with gameplay (Rogers, 2016). GBL can be highly motivating in ways that it provides rewards as immediate feedback on every choice made or answer given. It pushes students forward to the next level, so learning can be a pleasure when they succeed. GBL facilitates cognitive processes is learning from their mistakes. Students can choose to do an activity again, in order to try to improve performance. Besides, it gives the visual and auditory clues to support learners' understanding of the words themselves through graphics, audio, video or even animations. Kapp et al. (2014) stated that by implementing gamification -- which uses game-based mechanics, aesthetics, and game thinking -- teachers can engage students, motivate their action, promote their learning, and help them to solve problems. Fayad (2016) added that when teachers use gamification for learning they can take the mechanics from gameplay and apply to learning experience, to both engage and motivate students as well as to drive a meaningful behavior change.

Quizizz, is a game-based application for creating quizzes which is designed in order to make students enjoy learning and be more engaged as it provides competitive, multi-player games (Sato, 2019). Sato had implemented Quizizz to make reading activity more engaging. Priyanti et al. (2019) reported that students who were taught using Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) integrated with Quizizz got higher reading comprehension scores than those taught using conventional strategy. Rahayu and Purnawarman (2018) also confirmed that Quizizz for self-assessment had successfully improved students’ grammar understanding. Amalia (2020) had used Quizizz website for online assessment and reported that the students strongly agreed
Quizizz has an attractive display and it is better than the offline traditional test.

Based on the aforementioned background, this research aims to analyze the use of Quizizz in engaging students of General English for Young Learners online classes, grade 5 and grade 6. The research questions for this study are:

1. Can game-based application “Quizizz” engage young learners in the online EFL classroom?
2. How do students perceive the implementation of Quizizz in the online EFL classroom?

Researchers expected this study can give insights on how to implement Quizizz for teaching young learners in EFL online classroom and describe those young learners’ perspective on learning English using this game based learning.

**METHOD**

**Subject and Setting of the research**

The subjects of this research comprised 11 students of GEYL 5 class and 5 students of GEYL 6 class. These two classes were chosen because they were considered independent and could operate gadgets with or without help from their parents. In addition, the pre-intervention questionnaire results revealed that 11 out of 16 students had problems during online learning, one reason was poor internet connection, some prefer face-to-face sessions and had difficulties understanding the lessons. The research took place at LB LIA Karawaci during online learning and was conducted from October 9th to October 27th 2020. Every session lasted for 90 minutes covering a 20-minute before zoom session (BZS), a 40-minute-during zoom session (DZS), and a 30-minute after zoom session (AZS).

**The Classroom Action Research methods**

The classroom action research was conducted in three cycles to investigate how the use of Quizizz can stimulate young learners’ engagement and active involvement in the learning process. This was based on Arikunto (2010) stating that a research covered four phases in each cycle; planning, implementing and observing, and reflecting. These four phases were reflected in this research.

The first stage of the cycle was the planning where a pre-intervention questionnaire was given, lesson plans were designed, teaching schedules were determined, and teaching materials and tools were prepared. The second stage included implementing and observing parts which were conducted simultaneously. The implementing phase was the online teaching and the learning process was based on the designed lesson plans. Quizizz was alternatively used before zoom session, during zoom session, and after zoom session. During the implementing phase, observation was also conducted. Here, the observer focused on students’ engagement and active involvement when Quizizz was integrated in the learning process. The last stage was reflecting phase, where the research outcomes were evaluated, analyzed and measured. In this phase, teachers’ journals were made, post-intervention questionnaire was given, and interview was employed (figure 1).
Planning Stage
(questionnaire, lesson plans, teaching schedules, materials and aids)

Reflecting Stage
(teachers’ journals, questionnaire, and interview)

Implementing and Observing Stage
(Quizizz)

Figure 1. Research Phases in Each Cycle

In GEYL 5 class, the cycle 1 of the research was conducted on the second week of October. In this cycle, Quizizz was used during zoom session because students were introduced to the game for the first time. Cycle 2 was conducted on the third week of October, where a multiple choice Quizizz was used before zoom session and given as a review of the previous lesson. Two students asked the teacher’s permission to repeat playing Quizizz to get better scores. Finally, Quizizz in cycle 3 was conducted on the fourth week of October and was integrated during zoom session (figure 2).

Figure 2. GEYL 5 Quizizz Questions formats

For GEYL 6, Quizizz was also first introduced by the teacher before the implementation in cycle 1 and given during zoom session (DZS). Then in Cycle 2, Quizizz was used for an after zoom session activity and created in an open-ended format where students had to type correct answers and some given alternatives of responses were made available by teacher. Lastly in cycle 3, Quizizz was assigned before zoom session, as a review of the previous material (figure 3).
Research Procedures

Pre-intervention questionnaire was given to the participants highlighting English online learning students had been attending. Then, the students’ responses of the questionnaire result were analyzed. The pre-intervention questionnaire analysis led to the decision to design teaching strategy that included Quizizz to be used as parts of the online learning activities. Hence, the teaching schedules were set, the lesson plans were designed, and the teaching materials and aids were prepared. The interventions were taken in three cycles. In every session, the intervention was done in different sessions: before zoom session, during zoom session, or after zoom session. Students’ engagement was observed during these interventions by focusing on their attention, persistence, and task completion (figure 4). Then for the reflection, data were interpreted for the whole learning process. The reflection was taken from class observation, teachers’ journals in every cycle, questionnaires, and interview results.

Data Collection Techniques and Instrument

The data of this research were obtained through the analyses of pre-intervention and post-intervention questionnaires, observation, teachers’ journals and interview. Pre-intervention
questionnaire was given to the students to find out students’ attitude towards online learning. Observation was conducted during the implementation of Quizizz in the online learning. In addition, teachers’ journals were used to record existing problems, difficulties, and positive sides reflected during the implementation of Quizizz. The observation results and teachers’ journals in each cycle were analyzed to design the lesson plans for the next cycle. By the end of the research, students were given post-intervention questionnaire to find out whether or not they liked quiz and their perceptions towards the implementation during online learning sessions.

Data Analysis
To analyze the data, qualitative approach was used in which the collected data were elaborated descriptively. In each cycle where Quizizz was used, the outcomes of using Quizizz were identified to see students’ active involvement in the learning process. Then, all the data from the research were further analyzed to measure if Quizizz could stimulate students’ active involvement and positive perception after it was integrated in the learning activities.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION
This section presents findings and discussions of the research regarding the use of Game-Based application to Engage Young Learners in the EFL Online Classrooms.

Research Question 1: Can game-based application “Quizizz” engage young learners in the online EFL classroom?

To find out the answer to the first research question, students’ responses were analyzed from the 10 questions given in the Pre-intervention questionnaire. The questions were: How do you feel about face to face session?; How do you feel about learning vocabulary, reading, writing, speaking, watching clips, singing songs?; and How do you feel about online games? Responses shown from the Pre - intervention questionnaire varied from 70% feeling interested for learning vocabulary to 100% showing very interested for question about online games (figure 5). Thus, the majority of students are interested in learning online, even though they prefer learning face-to-face due to the fact that they miss their classmates. One student still has difficulties understanding teacher’s explanation on line and another one feels somewhat bored not being able to experience direct learning. However, students showed interest in the class activities during online when they watched short clips and did writing activities. Online platform also helped put them at ease because they could feel more relaxed talking to their teachers compared to offline session and the chances students got to meet their classmates. Most students indeed had no significant obstacles learning online, the only drawback is the technical problem: a poor internet connection. Additionally, all of them showed great interest in online games.

As for the implementation of Quizizz, from the teachers’ journals and post intervention questions, it was concluded that the majority (100%) of students liked to play it and found more excitement in competing with their classmates. In addition, 70% of students didn’t feel threatened even when they could not get maximum results or when they occasionally lost. Since Quizizz could be played in synchronous and asynchronous formats, even when few of them had problems with internet connection, they could resume the game out of the study hours (80%) and found out that the game was engaging.
Research question 2: How do students perceive the implementation of Quizizz in the online EFL classroom?

The teachers’ journals, post-intervention questions and additional interviews highlighted students’ positive perception regarding the implementation of Quizizz. Students found Quizizz interesting, as it was enriched with features such as music background, colorful layout, power up facility and funny memes. Although 10% of students disliked Quizizz if it was played in a synchronous mode due to the poor internet connection, they were still positive about Quizizz because teachers could find ways to put particular student in comfort by assigning him or her to be a reporter, informing the result of the game. However, there was a drawback. Students showed disinterest when the Quizizz question editor was an open-ended one, the underlying reason was they sometimes made inaccurate responses to the questions. The most preferred format for both classes was the multiple choice Quizizz. Hence, all in all the majority of students found that Quizizz was fun and students showed positive perception towards Quizizz integration in the learning sessions (figure 6).
CONCLUSIONS

The research finally came to several points of conclusions. The majority of students found Quizizz activities interesting, fun and engaging. Their engagement was not only notified during the scheduled sessions with before zoom, during zoom and after zoom settings, but also after class sessions where Quizizz could be resumed (asynchronous mode). Furthermore, students’ perception in the employment of Quizizz before, during and after zoom session was positive and that Quizizz integration encouraged strong involvement. Despite the connection problems and certain type of questions given in Quizizz, students ensured themselves that this learning game was a relaxing way to understand the lessons taught during online classes.

REFERENCES


