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Powering Reading with Gimkit: A Gamified Approach to Improve Reading Skills

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Abstract: Many senior high school students still experience difficulties in understanding English texts, particularly in identifying specific information and comprehending unfamiliar vocabulary. Therefore, this study aimed to improve students' reading skills through the implementation of Gimkit. This study employed Classroom Action Research (CAR) involving 33 tenth-grade students of MAN 5 Kediri in the 2026 academic year. The research was conducted in one cycle consisting of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting stages. Data were collected through reading tests and observation sheets. The findings showed that the implementation of Gimkit successfully improved students' reading skills. The students' mean score increased from 74.85 in the pre-test to 91.12 in the post-test. Furthermore, the percentage of students achieving the Minimum Mastery Criterion (KKM) increased from 57.58% to 100%. In addition, students demonstrated higher participation, motivation, and engagement during the learning process. These findings indicate that Gimkit is an effective learning medium for improving students' reading skills and creating a more interactive and enjoyable learning environment.

Keywords: Classroom Action Research, Gimkit, Reading Skills, Game-Based Learning

Introduction

Reading skills are a basic competency that is important for high school students to get information and knowledge in the digital era. Reading is more than just pronouncing text; it is a complex process for constructing meaning and understanding the message from the author (Pandiangan et al., 2021). However, many students face difficulties in achieving deeper comprehension. Issues such as reading anxiety can disrupt concentration, although the direct relationship with final grades sometimes varies (Kartika et al., 2023). Furthermore, developmental differences between elementary and middle-level students indicate that high school students require more complex strategies (Oliveira et al., 2023). Difficulties in reading are often caused by a lack of vocabulary mastery and effective strategies, thus requiring special interventions to improve fluency (Gedik & Akyol, 2022). Therefore, reading instruction at the high school level needs to be based on a thorough analysis of student characteristics and the types of texts studied in order to achieve optimal understanding (Mallipa et al., 2024).

As an innovative solution, the use of technology through game-based learning platforms such as Gimkit offers a more engaging approach. Gimkit has been proven effective in improving students' reading achievement (Wulandari et al., 2024). This platform has a positive impact on learning outcomes because it can create fun competitive learning (Pisba & Rahmanto, 2025). The implementation of Gimkit in English learning has also received positive feedback from teachers and students because it can significantly boost motivation and understanding (Habibullah, 2025). From a technical perspective, the 'economy' system within Gimkit encourages students to answer questions correctly to earn points, which indirectly trains their language skills (Chang & Chang, 2025). This innovative media with a technological motif is very suitable for the needs of students today who tend to prefer learning that is visual and interactive (Andriana et al., 2024).

Based on preliminary research conducted at the school, it was found that senior high school students still experience difficulties in finding specific information quickly and often feel bored with conventional learning methods. There is a gap between the demands of the curriculum, which require students to be skilled at reading functional texts, and the reality in the classroom where the available learning media are still limited to textbooks. Although some studies have discussed gamification, there are still few that specifically investigate the use of Gimkit to improve reading aspects at the upper secondary level in the context of classroom action research.

Therefore, this research is very necessary to offer an alternative learning media that can increase motivation as well as improve students' reading skills. It is hoped that the use of Gimkit will not only eliminate boredom but also strengthen information retention through fun question repetition. The focus of this study is to explain how the implementation of Gimkit can improve high school students' reading skills in understanding English texts.

Method

Research Design

This research uses a Classroom Action Research (CAR) design. This design was chosen because it aims to improve the quality of classroom learning in a systematic and practical way. As stated in the research by Ningrum et al. (2024), Classroom Action Research is a process consisting of four main stages that form a cycle. This view aligns with the opinion of Aldiansya et al. (2025), who emphasize that action research includes planned stages, namely planning, action, observation, and reflection, to improve students' understanding of written texts in English.

Research Context and Participants

The subjects in this study were tenth-grade students at MAN 5 Kediri in the 2026 academic year. The participants consisted of 33 students, divided into 20 male students and 13 female students. The selection of subjects was based on initial findings regarding the low reading accuracy of students in that class.

Data Collection

This research procedure follows a Classroom Action Research model consisting of four stages: planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. The action was conducted in one cycle because the success criteria were achieved after the implementation of the action.

Planning

Preparing a Lesson Plan (RPP) that integrates the Gimkit Web-Game and preparing reading text materials. Reading materials and comprehension questions were designed based on the learning objectives and students' profiency levels. The researcher prepared the Gimkit platform, observation sheets, and reading tests to collect data during the implementation. In addition, the researcher determined the success criteria of the study based on the Minimum Mastery Criterion (KKM) and students' classroom participation.

Acting

The researcher implemented actions in the classroom by using Gimkit. Students were given a pre-test consisting of 20 multiple-choice questions, group work activity consisting of 10 questions and the post-test consisting of 25 multiple-choice questions and 5 short-answer questions. Throughout the process, the researcher guided the students, provided clarification when necessary, and ensured that all students actively participated in the activities.

Observing

The researcher observed student activities during the learning process. The observation focused on students' enthusiasm, the way they scanned texts, as well as technical or comprehension difficulties that arose while using the media. The researcher also observed how students used reading strategies to understand the texts, identify specific information, and answer comprehension questions.

Reflecting

The researcher analyzed the test results and observation sheets to evaluate the effectiveness of the action. The strengths and weaknesses of the implementation were identified based on students' performance and classroom observations. The researcher examined whether the success criteria had been achieved and evaluated the extent to which Gimkit contributed to the improvement of students' reading skills. The findings from this stage were used to determine the effectiveness of the action and to provide recommendations for future teaching practices.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using Reflexive Thematic Analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2021). Analysis began with repeated reading of the three data sources—the completed translation products, classroom observation notes, and interview transcripts—to achieve familiarity with each participant's translation process. The researchers first conducted within-case analysis by examining each participant individually to identify meaningful cognitive activities occurring throughout AI-assisted translation. Initial inductive codes were generated from participants' observable actions, translated texts, and interview accounts without imposing predetermined theoretical categories. Examples of these initial codes included *requesting lexical alternatives*, *seeking semantic clarification*, *reformulating AI-generated sentences*, *comparing AI output with the source text*, *rejecting inaccurate suggestions*, *revising prompts*, and *reconstructing translated texts*.

Subsequently, related codes were grouped into broader categories through iterative comparison across the five cases. These categories were continuously refined until three overarching themes emerged that collectively described the cognitive architecture of AI-assisted translation. After the inductive themes had been established, the researchers conducted cross-case analysis to identify common cognitive patterns as well as individual variations among participants. Finally, the emergent themes were interpreted through the complementary theoretical lenses of Distributed Cognition Theory (Hutchins, 1995) and Metacognitive Monitoring (Nelson, 1990). These theories were employed during interpretation rather than theme generation to explain how cognitive work was distributed between learners and AI, how learners regulated AI-generated outputs, and how human agency was maintained throughout translation reconstruction.

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness was established using the criteria of credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Credibility was enhanced through methodological triangulation by integrating evidence from participants' completed translation products, classroom observations, and semi-structured interviews. Rather than relying on a single source of evidence, emerging interpretations were continuously compared across the three datasets to ensure that each theme was supported by converging evidence. Dependability was strengthened through maintaining a detailed audit trail documenting coding decisions, category refinement, and theme development throughout the analytical process. Confirmability was enhanced through iterative researcher discussions and reflexive memo writing to minimize subjective interpretation during coding and analysis. Transferability was facilitated by providing rich descriptions of the research context, participant characteristics, data collection procedures, and analytical processes, enabling readers to determine the applicability of the findings to comparable educational contexts.

Ethical Considerations

Prior to data collection, all participants received detailed information regarding the purpose of the study and voluntarily provided informed consent. Participants were informed that their involvement was entirely voluntary and that they could withdraw from the study at any stage without academic consequences. To protect confidentiality, pseudonyms were assigned to all participants, and identifying information was removed from transcripts and research records. The collected data were securely stored and used exclusively for academic research purposes.

Results and Discussion

Results

Based on initial observations in the classroom on April 16, 2026, it was found that students had difficulties in comprehending English texts, especially in identifying specific information and understanding unfamiliar vocabulary. In addition, students showed low enthusiasm during reading activities because the learning process was mainly conducted through textbooks and conventional exercises. To determine students' initial reading ability, a pre-test was administered. The results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Students' Pre-Test Score

Student's Number	Student's Score
1	40
2	90
3	40

4	80
5	70
6	90
7	100
8	100
9	100
10	100
11	80
12	100
13	90
14	70
15	80
16	20
17	30
18	50
19	90
20	80
21	60
22	70
23	40
24	100
25	90
26	70
27	100
28	80
29	50
30	70
31	30
32	80
33	100
Total	**2470**
Mean	**74.85**

Based on Table 1, the total score obtained by the students was 2470, with a mean score of 74.85. The results indicate that students' reading skills were still relatively low. Several students obtained scores far below the Minimum Mastery Criterion (KKM) of 75, including scores of 20, 30, 40, and 50. Although some students achieved high scores, the overall average had not yet reached the expected level. Therefore, an action was needed to improve students' reading skills through the implementation of Gimkit.

Implementation of the Action

The action took place on April 30, 2026. This action was conducted in one meeting to introduce Gimkit as a learning medium to be used in reading activities and explained how to use the platform and informed students about the learning objectives. The students were asked to read an English text and answer reading comprehension questions through the Gimkit platform.

During the learning process, most students showed a positive response toward the learning activity. They appeared enthusiastic and interested because the use of Gimkit provided a different learning experience from the conventional methods usually applied

in the classroom. The game-based features and competition encouraged students to participate actively in the reading activities.

To promote collaboration and engagement, the students were divided into five groups. Each group worked together to answer the questions and gain the highest score. The performance of each group was evaluated based on the total score they achieved during the activity. The results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Level of Awards

Number of Groups	Names	Score	Total	Awards
1	1. Risma	5	26	Good Team
	2. Devinda	4		
	3. Suci	5		
	4. Riski	4		
	5. Aris	4		
	6. Fadhil	4		
2	1. Yulia	3	19	Good Team
	2. Danisha	4		
	3. Ricky	3		
	4. Afrigh	3		
	5. Ageng	3		
	6. Yaafi	3		
3	1. Dea	4	26	Good Team
	2. Lili	4		
	3. Alwi	4		
	4. Radit	3		
	5. Raditya	4		
	6. Ni'am	4		
	7. Nuril	3		
4	1. Nazil	4	28	Good Team
	2. Novi	4		
	3. Hafizh	4		
	4. Adam	4		
	5. Azka	4		
	6. Zaky	4		
	7. Syifa	4		
5	1. Vika	4	25	Good Team
	2. Anggun	3		
	3. Shelvia	4		
	4. Hakim	4		
	5. Lahes	3		
	6. Ali	3		
	7. Rosyid	4		

Based on Table 2, all groups successfully achieved the Good Team category. Group 4 obtained the highest total score of 28, while Group 2 obtained the lowest total score of 19. These results indicate that the students were able to collaborate effectively and actively participate in the learning process. Furthermore, the competitive and interactive features of Gimkit encouraged students to discuss the answers, support one another, and engage more actively in reading comprehension activities.

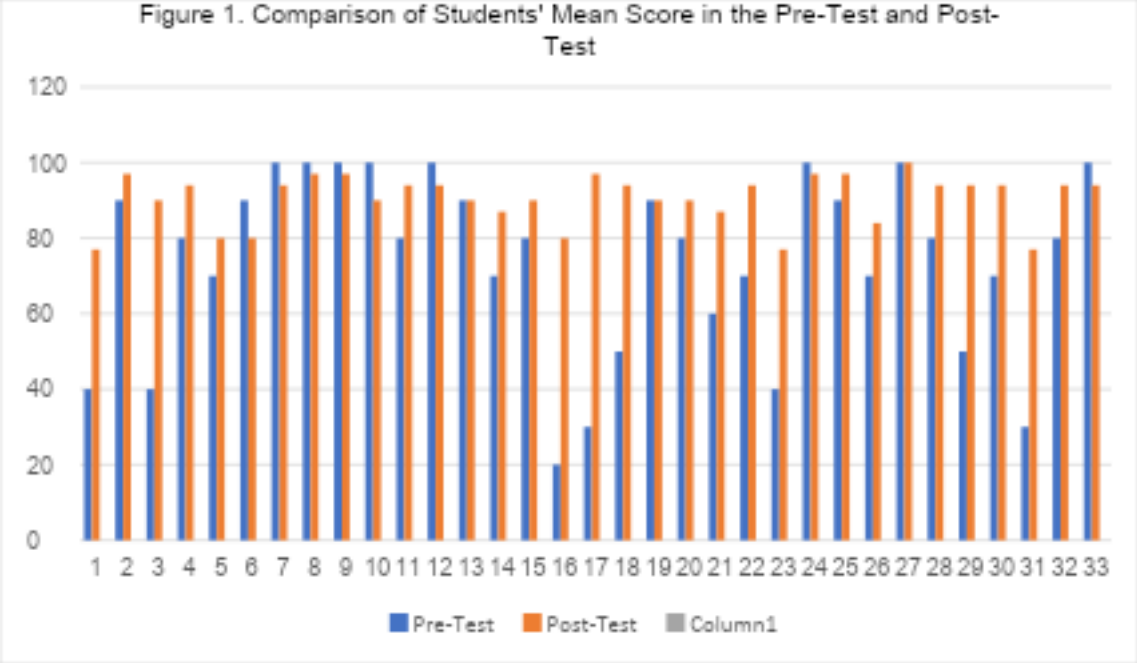
However, the observation results revealed that some students still faced difficulties in understanding unfamiliar vocabulary and identifying detailed information in the text. In addition, several students paid more attention to the gaming aspect than to the comprehension of the reading material. Therefore, several improvements were planned for the second meeting, including providing vocabulary support, giving clearer instructions, and offering more guidance during the reading activities.

The third meeting was conducted on May 20, 2026. Students demonstrated greater confidence and engagement. They participated actively in answering questions, discussing reading materials, and competing with their classmates. Compared to the previous meeting, students showed better comprehension of the texts and were able to identify important information more accurately. At the end of the second meeting, a post-test was administered to measure students' reading achievement. The results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Students' Post-Test Results

Student's Number	Student's Score
1	77
2	97
3	90
4	94
5	80
6	80
7	94
8	97
9	97
10	90
11	94
12	94
13	90
14	87
15	90
16	80
17	97
18	94
19	90
20	90
21	87
22	94
23	77
24	97
25	97
26	84
27	100
28	94
29	94
30	94
31	77
32	94
33	94

Total	**3007**
Mean	**91.12**



Based on Table 3 and Figure 1, the total score obtained by the students was 3007, with a mean score of 91.12. The results indicate a substantial improvement compared to the pre-test mean score of 74.85. Most students achieved scores above the Minimum Mastery Criterion (KKM), with several students obtaining scores of 97 and one student achieving a perfect score of 100.

The improvement can be seen from the increase in the mean score from 74.85 in the pre-test to 91.12 in the post-test. Furthermore, the percentage of students achieving the Minimum Mastery Criterion (KKM) increased from 57.58% in the pre-test to 100% in the post-test. This indicates that the implementation of Gimkit successfully improved students' reading skills. Students became more motivated, active, and confident in understanding English texts through interactive game-based learning activities.

Discussion

The findings demonstrate that AI-assisted translation is better understood as a distributed cognitive system than as a technology-assisted linguistic activity. Rather than The improvement in students' reading performance indicates that the implementation of Gimkit-based learning contributed positively to the development of their reading comprehension skills. The findings support the view proposed by Pandiangan et al. (2021), who describe reading as an active process in which readers construct meaning by interacting with and interpreting information presented in a text. In this study, students were not merely asked to read texts and provide answers in a conventional manner. Instead, they were actively involved in responding to reading comprehension questions through Gimkit. The platform required students to identify relevant information, interpret the meaning of texts, recognize important details, and select appropriate answers within a game-based learning environment. The immediate feedback provided by the platform also allowed students to recognize their mistakes and reconsider their understanding of the text. Thus, the repeated interaction between

students, reading texts, questions, and feedback may have helped students develop a more active approach to reading comprehension.

The findings are also consistent with Wulandari et al. (2024), who reported that the use of Gimkit could improve students' reading achievement. A similar improvement was observed in the present study, as students demonstrated better performance after participating in Gimkit-based reading activities. One possible explanation is that Gimkit transformed reading comprehension practice from a relatively conventional activity into an interactive learning experience. In a traditional reading lesson, students may read a passage and answer questions individually, which can sometimes result in limited participation, particularly among students who are less confident in English. Through Gimkit, however, students were provided with an opportunity to answer questions repeatedly in an environment that encouraged active participation. The game format also provided students with a clear and immediate indication of their performance. Consequently, students had opportunities to identify areas of difficulty and improve their responses during subsequent activities. This repeated practice may have contributed to the improvement of their reading comprehension performance.

The findings further support Pisba and Rahmanto (2025), who found that Gimkit can create a fun and competitive learning environment that positively influences students' learning outcomes. The competitive features of Gimkit appeared to play an important role in encouraging students to become more involved in the learning process. During the implementation of the activities, students showed enthusiasm in answering questions correctly, obtaining points, and improving their rankings. Competition in this context functioned not merely as a means of determining the highest-performing students but also as a stimulus for students to remain focused on the learning task. The game-based environment created a sense of challenge that encouraged students to pay closer attention to the reading texts and questions. As a result, reading activities that might otherwise be perceived as difficult or monotonous became more engaging. This suggests that the motivational features of gamification can complement the cognitive processes involved in reading comprehension.

The present findings are also in line with Habibullah (2025), who reported that Gimkit can increase students' motivation and understanding in English learning. Increased motivation was evident from students' active participation throughout the learning activities. Rather than passively waiting for explanations from the teacher, students were encouraged to respond to questions, monitor their scores, and compete with their peers. Such active involvement is important in English reading instruction because comprehension requires students to engage continuously with the text. When students are motivated to participate, they are more likely to devote attention to the reading material and make greater effort to understand the information contained in it. Therefore, the increased enthusiasm observed during the implementation of Gimkit may have supported students' willingness to practice reading comprehension and consequently contributed to their improved achievement.

The findings also reinforce the argument presented by Anggrainy et al. (2024) that gamification can enhance students' motivation and engagement in EFL reading learning. In the present study, the game-based characteristics of Gimkit appeared to reduce the monotonous nature of repeated reading practice. Features such as points, rankings, challenges, and immediate responses provided students with external stimuli to remain engaged with the learning activities. Importantly, the increased engagement was not limited to students who already possessed strong reading skills. The game environment provided opportunities for students to participate regardless of their initial level of ability. As students repeatedly encountered reading questions, they were able to become

more familiar with the types of information they needed to identify and the strategies required to answer comprehension questions. Increased engagement, therefore, may have supported both the affective and cognitive dimensions of reading development.

In addition, the findings support Chang and Chang (2025), who emphasize that the reward system in Gimkit can encourage students to engage in repeated practice. Repetition is particularly relevant to reading comprehension because students need sufficient exposure to texts and comprehension tasks to develop effective reading strategies. In this study, Gimkit provided students with multiple opportunities to encounter questions related to the reading materials. Through this repeated exposure, students could practice locating specific information, identifying main ideas, interpreting details, and making connections between information in the text. Immediate feedback further strengthened the learning process because students could recognize whether their responses were correct and learn from incorrect answers. The combination of repetition, feedback, and motivation may therefore explain, at least in part, the improvement observed in students' post-test performance.

The improvement in students' reading achievement can also be understood from the interaction between cognitive engagement and motivation. Reading comprehension does not depend solely on students' ability to recognize vocabulary or grammatical structures; it also requires attention, interpretation, inference, and the ability to connect information within a text. Gimkit provided a learning environment in which these cognitive processes were repeatedly practiced while students were simultaneously motivated by the game elements. When students were challenged to answer questions accurately and quickly, they were encouraged to read more carefully and focus on relevant information. The immediate results and scoring system then provided reinforcement for their participation. This interaction between cognitive practice and motivational support may have made the reading activities more meaningful and contributed to the improvement in learning outcomes.

Another important finding concerns classroom participation. The implementation of Gimkit appeared to create a more student-centered learning environment in which students were actively involved in the learning process. In conventional teacher-centered reading activities, classroom interaction may be dominated by teacher explanations, while some students remain passive. In contrast, the use of Gimkit required students to respond directly to questions and make decisions independently. The competitive and interactive features also generated classroom interaction as students responded to the results and rankings. This increased participation is pedagogically important because active involvement provides students with more opportunities to practice their English skills. Therefore, the effectiveness of Gimkit in this study should not be viewed only in terms of the increase in test scores but also in relation to the changes in students' classroom behavior, particularly their motivation, participation, and engagement.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that Gimkit can function as an effective game-based learning medium for supporting the development of students' reading comprehension skills. Its effectiveness appears to result from the combination of several features, including interactive questioning, repeated practice, immediate feedback, rewards, competition, and student engagement. These features create learning conditions that encourage students to interact more actively with reading materials while maintaining their motivation to participate. The improvement in reading achievement observed in this study is therefore consistent with previous research emphasizing the potential of gamification to improve both learning outcomes and student engagement in EFL contexts. Nevertheless, Gimkit should be viewed as a supporting instructional medium rather than a replacement for the teacher or for appropriate reading strategies.

Its effectiveness depends on the quality of the reading materials, the relevance of the questions, the teacher's instructional design, and the extent to which the game elements are integrated with the learning objectives.

Based on these findings, Gimkit can be considered a valuable alternative medium for teaching reading at the senior high school level. The platform is particularly useful for providing additional reading comprehension practice in an engaging classroom environment. By integrating Gimkit with appropriate texts, comprehension strategies, teacher guidance, and reflective activities, teachers can create learning experiences that address both the cognitive and affective aspects of reading. The results of this study consequently suggest that the use of gamification through Gimkit has potential not only to improve students' reading achievement but also to foster greater motivation, participation, confidence, and engagement in EFL reading instruction.

Conclusion

This Classroom Action Research was conducted in one cycle and demonstrated that the implementation of Gimkit can improve students' reading skills in a tenth-grade class at MAN 5 Kediri. The findings revealed that the use of Gimkit successfully improved students' reading skills. This improvement was evidenced by the increase in the students' mean score from 74.85 in the pre-test to 91.12 in the post-test and the percentage of students achieving the Minimum Mastery Criterion (KKM) increased from 57.58% in the pre-test to 100% in the post-test. In addition, students showed greater participation, motivation, and engagement during reading activities. The interactive and competitive features of Gimkit encouraged students to actively read texts, answer comprehension questions, and collaborate with their peers.

Furthermore, the findings indicate that Gimkit can be an effective game-based learning platform for teaching reading at the senior high school level. The platform not only improved students' reading achievement but also created a more enjoyable and interactive learning environment. Future researchers may conduct similar studies involving different language skills, educational levels, or longer implementation periods to obtain more comprehensive findings.

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