

DIGITAL LITERACY FOR DEVELOPING READING SKILLS IN EFL CONTEXTS: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW

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DOI: 10.30595/aplinesia.v9i2.29838

Submission Track:

Received: 11-10-2025

Final Revision: 17-11-2025

Available Online: 12-12-2025

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ABSTRACT

Digital literacy has become an essential component in English Language Teaching (ELT), particularly as reading practices increasingly take place in digital learning environments. This systematic literature review aims to explore how digital literacy is conceptualized in EFL reading instruction, how it supports students' reading skills, and what benefits and challenges emerge from its implementation. A systematic search was conducted using academic databases, including Google Scholar and ERIC, to identify relevant studies related to digital literacy and reading skills in EFL contexts. The selected studies were analyzed thematically to identify key patterns and findings. The results indicate that digital literacy plays a significant role in enhancing reading

comprehension, critical reading, student engagement, and collaborative learning through the use of digital texts and tools. However, challenges such as unequal access to technology, teachers' pedagogical readiness, and students' limited digital reading skills remain significant issues. This review highlights the importance of integrating digital literacy into EFL reading instruction in a structured and pedagogically meaningful manner.

Keywords: digital literacy; reading skills; EFL; English Language Teaching; systematic literature review

1. INTRODUCTION

Reading is a fundamental skill in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning, as it plays a crucial role in supporting learners' vocabulary development, grammatical awareness, and overall language proficiency. Through reading, learners are exposed to various language structures, discourse patterns, and cultural contexts that contribute to their communicative competence. Traditionally, reading instruction in EFL contexts has relied heavily on printed textbooks and linear texts, with teachers guiding students to comprehend written materials through conventional reading strategies.

However, rapid advancements in digital technology have significantly transformed reading practices in educational settings. The widespread use of digital devices and online platforms has shifted reading activities from print-based texts to digital formats such as online articles, e-books, blogs, and multimedia texts. As a result, EFL learners are increasingly required to engage with texts presented in digital environments. This shift has changed not only the format of reading materials but also the way learners interact with texts.

Reading in digital environments presents new challenges and demands for EFL learners. Digital texts are often non-linear and multimodal, requiring readers to navigate hyperlinks, integrate

information from various sources, and interpret visual and audio elements alongside written text. In addition, learners must evaluate the credibility and relevance of online information, as digital environments provide access to a vast amount of content with varying levels of reliability. Without appropriate skills, students may experience difficulties such as information overload, superficial reading, and reduced comprehension.

These challenges highlight the importance of digital literacy in EFL reading instruction. Digital literacy is commonly understood as the ability to access, evaluate, and use digital information critically and responsibly. In the context of ELT, digital literacy extends beyond technical competence to include cognitive and critical skills that support effective reading and learning. As digital texts become a primary source of learning materials, digital literacy plays an increasingly important role in enabling learners to engage meaningfully with reading tasks.

Previous studies have suggested that digital literacy can enhance students' reading comprehension, critical thinking, and engagement by providing interactive features and access to authentic reading materials. Digital tools such as annotation features, online dictionaries, and multimedia support can assist learners in understanding complex texts and unfamiliar vocabulary. At the same time, research also highlights several challenges related to the integration of digital literacy in reading instruction, including unequal access to technology, limited teacher preparation, and students' varying levels of digital reading skills.

Despite the growing body of research on digital literacy and reading, findings across studies remain fragmented. Different studies emphasize different aspects of digital literacy and its impact on reading skills, making it difficult to draw comprehensive conclusions. Therefore, a systematic synthesis of existing research is needed to provide a clearer understanding of how digital literacy is defined, implemented, and utilized to support reading skills in EFL contexts.

This systematic literature review aims to synthesize previous studies on digital literacy and reading skills in EFL learning contexts. Specifically, this review addresses the following research questions:

1. How is digital literacy defined and discussed in EFL reading instruction?
2. How does digital literacy support students' reading skills in EFL learning contexts?
3. What benefits and challenges emerge from the integration of digital literacy in reading instruction?

By systematically reviewing and synthesizing existing studies, this research seeks to provide insights into the role of digital literacy in EFL reading instruction and to identify implications for teaching practices and future research.

2. Methodology

2.1 Research

2.1 Research Design

This study employed a systematic literature review design to examine previous research on digital literacy and reading skills in EFL contexts. A systematic approach was adopted to ensure that the review process was transparent, structured, and aligned with the research questions. The focus of the review was on synthesizing findings from selected studies rather than summarizing individual articles.

2.2 Data Sources

The studies included in this review were collected from reputable academic databases, including Google Scholar and ERIC, as well as peer-reviewed ELT journals. These databases were selected because they provide access to scholarly research related to digital literacy, reading skills, and English language teaching.

2.3 Search Strategy

A systematic search was conducted using combinations of keywords such as digital literacy, reading skills, reading comprehension, EFL, ELT, and digital reading. Boolean operators (AND,OR) were used to refine the search results. Only studies published in English and relevant to EFL contexts were considered.

2.4 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Inclusion criteria:

1. Studies focusing on digital literacy and reading skills
2. Research conducted in EFL or ELT contexts
3. Peer-reviewed journal articles and academic books
4. Studies published in English

Exclusion criteria:

1. Studies not related to reading skills
2. Research conducted outside EFL contexts
3. Non-academic publications such as blogs or opinion articles

2.5 Data Analysis

2.6 PRISMA Flow

Stage	Description	Number of Studies
Identification	Records identified through database searching	45
Screening	Records after duplicates removed	32
Eligibility	Full-text articles assessed	24
Included	Studies included in final review	20

3. Findings and Discussion

This section presents the findings of the systematic literature review and discusses them thematically based on the analysis of selected studies related to digital literacy and reading skills in EFL contexts. Rather than presenting individual study summaries, the findings are synthesized to identify common patterns, relationships, benefits, and challenges across studies. The discussion focuses on how digital literacy is conceptualized, how it supports reading skills, and how digital tools are implemented in EFL reading instruction. To provide a clearer overview of the reviewed studies, Table 1 summarizes the characteristics of selected studies related to digital literacy and reading skills in EFL contexts.

Table 1. Characteristics of Selected Studies on Digital Literacy and Reading Skills

No	Author (s) & Year	Context	Focus of Study	Research Method	Key Findings
1.	Coiro & Hobbs (2016)	EFL / Digital reading	Digital literacy and reading instruction	Conceptual review	Digital literacy supports comprehension and critical reading in digital environments
2.	Jang et al. (2022)	EFL learners	Digital reading engagement	Quantitative	Higher engagement in digital reading is associated with better reading comprehension
3.	Hidayat et al. (2024)	Indonesian EFL students	Digital storytelling and reading comprehension	Experimental	Digital storytelling improves reading comprehension and learning motivation

4.	Turner et al. (2019)	Secondary EFL contexts	Digital texts and literacy practices	Qualitative	Digital texts encourage collaborative and critical reading practices
5.	Weber et al. (2018)	EFL contexts	Digital texts and reading comprehension	Mixed-method	Digital texts enhance comprehension when supported by teacher guidance

As shown in Table 1, the reviewed studies vary in research context and methodology, yet they consistently highlight the importance of digital literacy in supporting students' reading skills. The synthesis of these studies indicates that digital literacy contributes to reading development through improved comprehension, engagement, and critical reading practices when appropriately integrated into EFL instruction.

3.1 Concept of Digital Literacy in ELT

The concept of digital literacy has been widely discussed in educational research, particularly in response to the rapid integration of digital technologies into teaching and learning processes. In the context of English Language Teaching (ELT), digital literacy is generally understood as more than the ability to operate digital devices or access online materials. Instead, it involves a combination of technical, cognitive, and critical skills that enable learners to engage effectively with digital texts.

Several studies emphasize that digital literacy includes the ability to locate, evaluate, and interpret digital information critically. This aspect is particularly important in EFL contexts, where students frequently encounter digital texts with varying levels of linguistic complexity and credibility. Learners are required not only to understand the language used in texts but also to assess the reliability of sources and the relevance of information. As a result, digital literacy supports students in becoming more strategic and critical readers.

In ELT settings, digital literacy is closely related to reading instruction because reading activities increasingly involve digital platforms. Digital texts often incorporate multimodal elements such as images, videos, hyperlinks, and interactive features. These characteristics require readers to apply different strategies compared to traditional printed texts. Studies reviewed in this research suggest that digital literacy enables students to navigate these multimodal elements and integrate information from multiple sources to construct meaning.

Furthermore, digital literacy in ELT is often associated with the development of higher-order thinking skills. When students engage with digital reading materials, they are encouraged to analyze information, compare perspectives, and reflect on content critically. These skills are essential for academic reading and are particularly relevant in EFL contexts, where learners need to develop both language proficiency and critical awareness. Overall, the reviewed studies indicate that digital literacy serves as a foundational competence that supports effective reading instruction in digital learning environments.

3.2 Digital Literacy and Reading Skills

The synthesis of previous studies indicates a strong relationship between digital literacy and the development of reading skills in EFL contexts. As reading practices increasingly shift to digital environments, learners are required to apply both traditional

reading strategies and digital-specific competencies. Digital literacy supports students in comprehending digital texts, managing information, and engaging more deeply with reading tasks. To further clarify how digital literacy supports different aspects of reading skills, Table 2 presents a thematic overview of the contributions of digital literacy to EFL reading development.

Table 2. Contributions of Digital Literacy to EFL Reading Skills

No	Aspect of Digital Literacy	Reading Skill Supported	Explanation
1.	Navigating digital texts	Reading comprehension	Helps students manage non-linear texts and hyperlinks effectively
2.	Evaluating online sources	Critical reading	Encourages learners to assess credibility, bias, and reliability of information
3.	Using annotation tools	Strategic reading	Supports highlighting, note-taking, and summarizing key ideas
4.	Engaging with multimedia elements	Meaning-making	Enhances understanding through visual and audio support

5.	Participating in online discussions	Interpretative skills	Promotes deeper comprehension through peer interaction and discussion
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As illustrated in Table 2, digital literacy supports multiple dimensions of reading skills in EFL contexts. These contributions demonstrate that digital literacy is not limited to technical competence but plays a significant role in enhancing comprehension, critical thinking, and strategic reading. When integrated into reading instruction with appropriate guidance, digital literacy helps students engage more deeply with digital texts and develop essential reading skills.

3.2.1 Digital Literacy and Reading Comprehension

Many studies highlight the role of digital literacy in enhancing reading comprehension. Digital texts are often non-linear and require readers to navigate hyperlinks, integrate multimedia elements, and select relevant information from multiple sources. Students with higher levels of digital literacy are better equipped to manage these demands and demonstrate stronger comprehension skills.

In EFL contexts, digital literacy supports reading comprehension by providing learners with access to supportive digital features such as online dictionaries, annotation tools, and hyperlinks. These features allow students to clarify unfamiliar vocabulary and concepts without interrupting the reading process. As a result, learners can maintain focus and develop a deeper understanding of texts. However, the reviewed studies also suggest that without proper guidance, students may rely too heavily on surface-level strategies, leading to shallow comprehension.

3.2.2 Digital Literacy and Critical Reading

Digital literacy also plays a significant role in developing critical reading skills. Digital environments expose learners to a vast amount of information, including texts of varying quality and reliability. As a result, readers must evaluate sources, identify bias, and distinguish between factual information and opinion.

The reviewed studies indicate that digital literacy encourages students to engage in critical reading practices by questioning the purpose and credibility of digital texts. In EFL classrooms, teachers

can support this process by guiding students to analyze author perspectives, compare information across sources, and reflect on the validity of digital content. These practices help learners become more critical and reflective readers, which is an essential skill in academic and real-world contexts.

3.2.3 Digital Literacy, Engagement, and Motivation

Another important finding across studies is the relationship between digital literacy and student engagement in reading activities. Digital texts often include interactive and multimedia elements that make reading more engaging and accessible. Features such as videos, images, and interactive annotations can capture students' attention and increase motivation to read.

In EFL learning contexts, increased engagement is particularly valuable, as students may experience difficulties or lack motivation when reading in a foreign language. Digital literacy enables learners to interact actively with texts, which can lead to increased reading frequency and improved reading confidence. However, the studies also emphasize the need for instructional support to ensure that engagement leads to meaningful learning rather than distraction.

3.3 Digital Tools and Reading Practices

Digital tools play a crucial role in shaping reading practices in EFL classrooms. The reviewed studies highlight various digital tools that support guided, interactive, and collaborative reading activities. When integrated effectively, these tools enhance students' reading experiences and promote active engagement with texts.

3.3.1 Guided Digital Reading

Guided digital reading is one of the most commonly reported practices in the reviewed literature. In this approach, teachers select appropriate digital texts and guide students through reading activities using digital platforms. Teachers may model reading strategies such as predicting, questioning, and summarizing while students engage with digital texts.

Studies indicate that guided digital reading supports students' comprehension and strategy use by providing structured support during the reading process. In EFL contexts, this practice helps students navigate digital texts more effectively and develop confidence in using digital reading tools.

3.3.2 Interactive and Multimodal Reading

Interactive and multimodal reading practices are also widely discussed in the reviewed studies. Digital texts often incorporate multimedia elements that support meaning-making and comprehension. Annotation tools, highlighting features, and embedded multimedia content allow students to interact with texts actively.

These interactive features support learners in identifying key ideas, making connections, and reflecting on content. In EFL contexts, multimodal support can be particularly beneficial for learners who struggle with complex language structures, as visual and audio elements provide additional context and reinforcement.

3.3.3 Collaborative Digital Reading

Collaborative reading practices are enhanced through the use of digital tools such as online discussion forums and shared documents. These tools allow students to discuss texts, share interpretations, and respond to peers' ideas. Collaborative digital reading encourages learners to articulate their understanding and engage in meaning negotiation.

The reviewed studies suggest that collaborative reading supports both reading comprehension and language development. In EFL classrooms, collaborative digital reading provides opportunities for meaningful language use while strengthening students' interpretative skills.

3.4 Benefits and Challenges of Digital Literacy in Reading Instruction

The reviewed literature highlights several benefits associated with the integration of digital literacy into reading instruction. These benefits include increased student engagement, improved access to authentic reading materials, and the development of critical reading skills. Digital literacy enables students to engage with real-world texts and develop skills that are relevant to academic and professional contexts.

Despite these benefits, the studies also identify several challenges. One major challenge is unequal access to digital technology, which may limit students' opportunities to engage in digital reading activities. Additionally, teachers may lack sufficient training or confidence in integrating digital literacy into reading instruction. Students' varying levels of digital literacy also present challenges, as not all learners possess the skills required for effective digital reading.

These findings suggest that digital literacy should not be viewed as a universal solution to reading difficulties. Instead, it should be integrated into reading instruction through careful planning, pedagogical support, and institutional involvement.

4. Implications for ELT

The findings of this systematic literature review provide several important implications for English Language Teaching (ELT), particularly in relation to reading instruction in digital learning environments. As digital texts continue to dominate educational contexts, digital literacy should be viewed as an essential component of reading instruction rather than an optional or supplementary skill. Integrating digital literacy into EFL reading instruction allows educators to align classroom practices with real-world literacy demands.

One key implication concerns the role of teachers in facilitating digital reading instruction. Teachers are encouraged to design reading activities that explicitly develop students' digital reading strategies, such as navigating hyperlinks, evaluating online sources, and integrating multimodal information. Teacher guidance is crucial to ensure that digital tools are used meaningfully to support comprehension rather than merely increasing students' exposure to technology. Without proper instructional support, students may focus on surface-level interaction with digital texts instead of developing deep reading comprehension.

Another important implication relates to curriculum design. EFL curricula should incorporate learning objectives that address both reading skills and digital literacy competencies. By embedding digital literacy into reading outcomes, curriculum designers can ensure that students develop the skills needed to engage effectively with digital texts in academic and everyday contexts. This integration also helps prepare learners for future academic and professional environments where digital reading is increasingly required.

Teacher professional development is also essential for the effective integration of digital literacy in reading instruction. Many teachers may be familiar with digital tools but lack pedagogical knowledge on how to use them to support reading skills. Professional development programs should focus not only on technical training but also on instructional strategies that promote critical and strategic digital reading. Providing ongoing support can help teachers feel more confident in implementing digital literacy in their classrooms.

From the learners' perspective, integrating digital literacy into reading instruction encourages students to become more autonomous and responsible readers. By developing digital reading strategies, students are better equipped to manage information, evaluate sources, and engage with texts independently. This autonomy is particularly important in EFL contexts, where opportunities to practice reading outside the classroom may be limited.

Finally, institutional and policy-level support is necessary to ensure equitable access to digital resources. Educational institutions should provide adequate infrastructure, digital devices, and internet access to support digital reading activities. Addressing issues of access and support can help reduce disparities in learning opportunities and ensure that digital literacy integration benefits all learners.

5. Conclusion

This systematic literature review has examined the role of digital literacy in developing reading skills in EFL learning contexts. By synthesizing findings from previous studies, this review has provided an overview of how digital literacy is conceptualized in ELT, how it supports reading skill development, and what benefits and challenges emerge from its integration into reading instruction.

The findings indicate that digital literacy plays a significant role in enhancing students' reading skills, particularly reading comprehension, critical reading, and engagement. Digital reading environments require learners to apply both traditional reading strategies and digital-specific competencies, such as navigating non-linear texts, evaluating information credibility, and integrating multimodal elements. When supported by appropriate instructional guidance, digital literacy enables students to engage more deeply with reading tasks and develop essential reading skills.

At the same time, this review highlights several challenges associated with the implementation of digital literacy in EFL reading instruction. Issues related to unequal access to technology, limited teacher preparation, and students' varying levels of digital literacy can hinder the effectiveness of digital reading practices. These challenges suggest that digital literacy should not be viewed as a universal solution to reading difficulties but as a pedagogical approach that requires careful planning and support.

Overall, this systematic literature review emphasizes the importance of integrating digital literacy into EFL reading instruction in a balanced and pedagogically meaningful manner. By aligning digital tools with instructional objectives, supporting teachers through professional development, and ensuring equitable access to digital resources, educators can maximize the potential of digital literacy to support students' reading development. Future research is encouraged to explore effective instructional strategies and long-term impacts of digital literacy on reading proficiency across diverse EFL contexts.

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used in English learning, one of those is Quizizz. According to Nabila et al., (2023) Quizizz is game-based educational tool that may be used to attract students' interest and motivate them to engage in the learning process. Quizizz is one of the learning media in the form of an application-based quiz game. Unlike other programmes, this one is designed for learning. With the help of this programme, students may respond to tests or questions with an engaging, basic presentation. Students will find it more difficult to finish it given the time constraints (Ningrum, 2022). Not only that, Quizizz can also be used to assess students' learning performance and achievement. According to Fazriyah et al. (2020) Quizizz is a mobile learning tool that may assist teachers in developing their instructional strategies. It will make the evaluation process simpler and boost the motivation of both teachers and students to study when applied in the classroom.

Moreover, Ningrum (2022) adds that to use Quizizz in the classroom, it is required a smartphone with an internet connection. Unfortunately, not all schools allow students to use smartphones in class, even for learning activities. There are some schools that still prohibit students from carrying smartphones in this digital era. To solve this problem, quizizz as a big online platform launched the new fitur that blend online and offline media. It called paper-mode quizizz (Heriyawati & Elfiyanto, 2023). According to Putra (2023), Quizizz offers paper-mode quizzes with printed paper, similar to a fast-response code. The multiple choices A, B, C, and D are printed on the paper code. Throughout the process of teaching and learning, teachers will pose certain queries. After the students have rotated the code to reveal their response, their teacher will use the Quizizz app on a smartphone to scan all of the response codes. As a result, students may actively respond to the questions given and view their scores and responses at that time. Teachers can undertake media-related activities offline with great benefit from the paper-mode feature. Furthermore, it benefits students who do not have access to smartphones, computers, or internet connectivity.

The aim of this literature review is to explore what present literature reveals about the using of paper-mode Quizizz in the English language learning and teaching as a useful learning tool. The impacts of Quizizz in paper form will be highlighted by the researcher's expertise gleaned from researching the literature. To gain understanding of the use of paper-mode Quizizz, it is necessary to research the relevant literature.

METHODOLOGY

In order to get comprehensive data about the usage of Quizizz in paper mode for English language learning, literature review techniques were chosen for this study and carried to. Therefore, to be able to collect the data, the researcher searched the key words "Paper-Mode Quizizz", "game-based learning", "gamification", and

“educational tool” on Google Scholar. After collecting some articles, the researcher read the articles that have been downloaded. The researcher skimmed and scanned the data, then making notes. A summary of the key points, the study strategy, and the conclusions was recorded in a Word document

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The followings were the steps in using paper-mode Quizizz in English learning including signing up, creating questions, printing Q-cards, and starting and scanning the Q-cards.

There are some studies about the use of paper-mode quizizz in English language learning and teaching. Firstly, Al Husnah *et al.*, (2023) aimed to unveil the unique insights and experiences of students regarding Quizizz Paper Mode as a tool for language assessment. This study used descriptive analysis as a qualitative method. Semi-structured interviews were used to acquire data from a wide range of pupils. Students from a diverse range of backgrounds set out to collect a broad range of data samples. Their unique motivation and level of activity during their English language acquisition expanded the study's reach. According to the research gathered, students view Quizizz Paper Mode as an engaging instrument for language evaluation that boosts their self-esteem, drives them more, and improves their reading comprehension.

Rizal Wahid Permana Putra (2023) also carried out the study about paper-mode quizizz. His study aimed to investigate the use of Paper-Mode Quizizz to improve students' vocabulary at eighth grade students. He used Classroom Action Research as the research methodology. The data demonstrated that the usage of paper-mode Quizizz dramatically increased the eighth-grade students' vocabulary proficiency. Additionally, using paper-mode Quizizz to acquire new vocabulary increased the students' enjoyment, participation, motivation, and engagement. Lastly, Khadijah Maming *et al.*, (2023) aimed to evaluate if using Quizizz in paper format, an engaging and interactive medium, will help junior high school students improve their vocabulary scores. According to this

study, paper-mode Quizizz is a useful tool for helping students become proficient in English vocabulary. The results revealed that paper-mode Quizizz considerably increased students' vocabulary achievement compared to other similar programmes utilised in the control group.

CONCLUSION

Based on the above explanations, it can be concluded that paper-mode Quizizz is one alternate site that offers a variety of tools for English teaching and learning . Moreover, Paper-mode Quizizz, students' responses are delivered via printed code cards. After the students have shown and rotated their Q-cards, their teacher will scan each response card to provide the score and real-time answer. Besides that, paper-mode Quizizz is user-friendly, entertaining, challenging, and fascinating. The students are therefore more inclined to take the Quizizz exam in paper mode. The using paper-mode Quizizz in ICT and non-ICT classroom has some advantages, they are, improve students' motivation, enhance students' confidence, improve students' vocabulary, help teacher in assessing students' learning outcomes

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