

UTILIZING KAHOOT IN SUPPORTING VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT: A REFLECTIVE PRACTICE IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE CLASSROOMS

Nelvia Ibrahim

Faculty of Education and Teacher Training,
State Islamic University of Sultan Syarif Kasim Riau,
Pekanbaru, Riau, Indonesia

nelvia.ibrahim@uin-suska.ac.id*

ABSTRACT

The integration of digital technology in education has brought new opportunities to enhance student engagement and learning outcomes. One of the most promising innovations is gamification, particularly through platforms like Kahoot, which offers a dynamic and interactive environment for learning. This paper explores the application of Kahoot in vocabulary instruction for English language learners, particularly those from Generation Z who exhibit high digital literacy and preference for interactive learning experiences. Drawing upon a descriptive qualitative approach, the article reflects on how Kahoot's features—such as real-time quizzes, competitive elements, and instant feedback—can transform vocabulary learning from a monotonous task into an enjoyable and effective classroom activity. The study discusses various types of Kahoot activities (quizzes, jumbles, surveys, and discussions), highlights implementation strategies for both online and face-to-face contexts, and evaluates the pedagogical advantages and potential challenges. Findings suggest that using Kahoot in vocabulary instruction not only enhances student motivation and participation but also supports better retention and comprehension. Limitations such as dependence on internet connectivity and the potential for speed to outweigh content mastery are also addressed. This paper offers practical insights for language teachers aiming to innovate vocabulary teaching using digital game-based learning tools.

KEYWORDS: Kahoot, Vocabulary Learning, Gamification, Game-Based Learning, Student Engagement

1 INTRODUCTION

English is the language of international communication. English has become a core topic in Indonesian middle schools, despite not being the most widely spoken language globally. Some Indonesians consider English to be their primary foreign language. Indonesian language learners face challenges in learning English, which requires mastery of four skills: writing, reading, listening, and speaking (Hummer & Rohimajaya, 2018). However, mastering vocabulary must come before learning the four components. Munawaroh (2022) emphasizes the importance of studying language before other skills.

*Correspondence: nelvia.ibrahim@uin-suska.ac.id

According to Abdullayuna, (2020), vocabulary plays a crucial role in speech activities such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing. This implies that vocabulary is the most significant aspect of language since it influences the four language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. To master four language skills. Students must first learn vocabulary, which improves their speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills.

According to Hummer & Rohimajaya (2018), vocabulary is widely regarded as a crucial aspect of both language learning and skill development. Vocabulary also determines how students interact with others. Mastering a language can lead to better communication skills. According to Neuman & Dwyer (2009), vocabulary is defined as the words that students must know to communicate their words and what they hear successfully. According to Zheng (2012), 45% of the students in his study found that learning vocabulary is boring. One explanation is that the traditional method does not properly cover students' learning needs.

Thus, educators must investigate other approaches that are effective in increasing students' interest in studying this language component. Teachers' traditional vocabulary learning practices, such as explaining word meanings and memorizing lists, are outdated and may discourage students from acquiring vocabulary effectively.

Furthermore, the majority of students nowadays are part of Generation Z, or Gen Z. This generation's learning styles differ from those of millennials and previous generations. They typically combine abstract conceptualization with reflective observation (Manzoni, Caporarello, Cirulli, & Magni, 2021). Students who have grown up with technology tend to be more didactic, utilizing available resources to study. They are more autonomous and aware of what and how they desire to learn (Iftode, 2019). The changing learning styles that students in this generation experience also have an impact on their acceptance of how their teachers present learning material.

Teachers need to do some revolution in the way of teaching in the learning process related to this era, the teacher should know and because of the advent of technology, teachers must be adept in the use of online learning programs. This situation is related to the impact of COVID-19 when all learning was done online. Teachers are expected to be more proficient at teaching both face-to-face and online utilizing cutting-edge technology and media. Online language learning (OLL) can take various forms, including web-based, hybrid, and virtual learning (Atmojo & Nugroho, 2020). As a result, teachers must select an online language learning form that is appropriate for the learners' needs and the information given.

There are numerous platforms for increasing students' vocabulary, one of them is using games in the Kahoot application. Kahoot is a game-based learning platform that is utilized as instructional technology in schools and other institutions.

Brand and Brooker in (Pah & Kesi, 2023) state that Kahoot is a popular game-based learning platform that is easy to use by both teachers and students. Jamie Brooker, Morten Versvik, and Johan Brand collaborated on its creation at the Norwegian University of Technology and Science. Kahoot, a game-based learning platform, is an example of digital learning medium.

Kahoot allows instructors to construct online examinations that students can take on their computers, tablets, or smartphones. Educators can create tests or platforms and connect students to them to assess their understanding of the information taught (Dellos, 2015). Students can also use the platform on their cell phones or other suitable devices.

Hidayati (2019) suggests that using the Kahoot! app might help students retain language through enjoyable and competitive games while also assisting teachers with assessment.

The conclusion is Kahoot is a game-based learning tool that is utilized in schools and other educational institutions. Educational games are multiple-choice quizzes made by users that may be accessed via a web browser or the Kahoot application. Kahoot platform helps you to learn successfully; because Kahoot is a technology medium, its technology is currently quite advanced. Everything is available to students in the teaching medium. Using the Kahoot application in the classroom helps engage students in vocabulary acquisition and minimizes boredom.

2 METHODOLOGY

This conceptual paper aimed at exploring the use of Kahoot as a digital game-based learning platform to support vocabulary acquisition in English language teaching. It employed a classroom-based reflective practice that discusses the pedagogical potential of using Kahoot for vocabulary acquisition. This paper reflects on classroom strategies, learner characteristics, learning outcomes, and prior literature. Therefore, the focus was on describing how Kahoot can be integrated into classroom instruction to enhance student engagement and retention of vocabulary. The analysis is grounded in reflective teaching practices and a synthesis of existing research on gamification in education.

3 UTILIZING KAHOOT IN VOCABULARY TEACHING

3.1. Classroom Activities

Playing games is enjoyable not just for children, but for all levels of learners. Everyone enjoys playing games because they allow them to create a pleasant environment in their surroundings. Thus, playing a game while learning a language is supposed to remove the barrier of boredom caused by tedious activities using an improper method. According to Huyen & Nga (2003) vocabulary learning through games can help students learn new words, practice using them, and recall their vocabulary list. Playing games can enhance the enjoyment of regular activities. Students experience various emotions when they complete vocabulary activities while playing a game.

Playing traditional games is entertaining for learners of all ages and skill levels. Everyone enjoys playing games because they enable them to create a nice environment for others around them. Thus, playing a game while learning a language is intended to overcome the boredom induced by monotonous chores carried out incorrectly. (Huyen & Nga, 2003) state that games can assist students in acquiring new words, practicing using them, and retaining their vocabulary list. Playing games can help you enjoy your normal activities more. Students feel a variety of emotions when they accomplish language activities while playing a game.

Gaming, especially Traditional game, has evolved into an interactive learning method because it uses techniques that encourage students to race and compete to be the game's winner. The techniques that are commonly employed in gamification include: (1) Point: students are vying to gather as many points as possible to be the winner; (2) Badges: These are visual representations of achievements acquired and accumulated in gamified activities. (3) The leaderboard

displays the rank of the pupils who won the game. (4) Level: Gamers are ranked accordingly on their completed levels (Alomori, Al-, & Yousef, 2019).

These strategies vary in terms of how the game producer rewards his gamer. This incentive encourages players to race and win the game. Games can improve student motivation, activity, and performance by providing a suitable setting and context. Students may be more active in completing tasks and boost their interest in learning if they find learning to be entertaining and engaging through games. One approach that could make the game and learning activity more enjoyable is to introduce the game before implementing it in class. Choosing a game that corresponds to the learning activity is critical. Teachers must select and evaluate whether this game is appropriate for the students' ages, satisfies the learning purpose, accommodates the quantity of learners, and is practical to implement.

Kahoot! has four kinds of games that can be used in the class: quiz, jumble, survey, and discussion, and they can be used favorably based on the needs and interests (Sabandar, Supit, & Suryana, 2018). When the Kahoot! game is played in an online class, the teacher needs another application to share the computer screen so the students could see their result (Kalleney, 2020). Kahoot! is played in real-time whether it is conducted in a face-to-face meeting or online class. (Sabandar, Supit, & Suryana, 2018) proposed teaching using Kahoot! online as follows: "Students should enter the system with a game pin (a number) and a nickname." Multiple-choice questions are provided via the video conference program, and learners can then answer them using a number of devices (computers, laptops, pads, and/or cellophanes) by connecting colors and shapes to the answers. The learners' goal is to select the correct answer as quickly as feasible and to get as many points as possible. The website even tracks users' progress by analysing what they performed during the Kahoot! as well as their general performance when logged in.

3.2. Discussion

There are some advantages and disadvantages of the Kahoot application in learning process. Kahoot! allows teachers and students to collaborate in a variety of difficult game-based learning activities. Students are not required to register or sign up to play the game. They simply enter the code via Kahoot! website: <https://kahoot.it/#/>, as instructed by their teacher (game host). This game could benefit both teachers and students because it allows them to play while learning (Kalleney, 2020).

Furthermore, (Felszeghy, et al., 2019) discovered that the Kahoot! application has benefited learners by increasing their learning motivation, resolving learner learning difficulties, facilitating student collaboration, and encouraging students to participate in the game. Using the Kahoot! app to provide quizzes allows teachers to provide direct feedback to students when they complete questions. Direct feedback would help students increase comprehension and recall their memory (Parera, Lee, Win, Perera, & Wijesuriya, 2008). Kahoot! can be used for distance learning, but it requires a video conference application that can share the teacher's screen, such as Zoom, Skype, WebEx, Google Meet, or others (Kalleney, 2020). Corrective feedback after the quiz is also beneficial for students' confidence, motivation, and self-esteem (Clynes & Raftery, 2008).

The usage of the Kahoot! application in the teaching-learning process offers several advantages; yet, this enjoyable game also has some disadvantages.

According to (Hodson, 2017), there are at least two weaknesses of using Kahoot! in the learning process, including: 1) The answers are true or false, yes or no, or multiple-choice questions, limiting students' ability to explain. As a result, following the game, corrective feedback and learning reflection are required; 2) the faster the learner answers, the greater his score. It is capable of emphasizing speed over content. As a result, this game is useful for memorizing material rather than commanding students to perform something.

One drawback of this application is that students with slower internet speeds may struggle to log in, leading to late participation. Furthermore, this application benefits from being a timely survey of student understanding at times. This shortcoming is problematic if the evaluation relies solely on the primary form, with no more rigorous and comprehensive assessment models integrated before and after. The application requires both smartphones and digital literacy. Students should have their devices, but not all schools supply them (Bicen & Kocakoyun, 2018).

4 CONCLUSION

Teaching vocabulary with the Kahoot! app clearly has an impact on students' learning outcomes. It is evident from their enthusiastic participation and success in learning vocabulary. The game's entertaining and competitive atmosphere encourages students to participate, and they instinctively acquire and grasp vocabulary content while answering game questions. When implementing the Kahoot! game online, teachers must provide alternative communication tools and share their computer screens with students. According to the experts, learning while playing can help students relax and absorb content more effectively, as well as increase their vocabulary mastery. The Kahoot application could be utilized as a learning tool while adopting distance learning.

REFERENCES

- Abdullayuna, M. D. (2020). Teaching Vocabulary as the Most Important Component of Speech Activity. *Journal INX- Amulti Disciplinary Peer Reviewed Journal*, 325. From <https://media.neliti.com/media/publications/335692-teaching-vocabulary-as-the-most-importan-d9ae21f0.pdf> . Retrived on 18th January 2025
- Alomori, I., Al-, S. H., & Yousef, R. (2019). The Role of Gamification Techniques in Promoting Student Learning. *A Review and Synthesis Journal of Information Technology Education*, 395-417. From DOI: [10.28945/4417](https://doi.org/10.28945/4417) Retrieved on 18th January 2025
- Atmojo, A., & Nugroho, A. (2020). EFL Classes Must Go Online! Teaching Activities and Challenges During COVID-19 Pandemic in Indonesia. *Register Journal*, 49-76. From DOI: <https://doi.org/10.18326/rgt.v13i1.49-76> Retrieved on 16th January 2025
- Bicen, H., & Kocakoyun, S. (2018). Perceptions of Students Gamification Approach: Kahoot Asia Case Study. *International Journal of Emerging Technologies in*

- Learning (IJET)*, 72. From DOI:[10.3991/ijet.v13i02.7467](https://doi.org/10.3991/ijet.v13i02.7467) . Retrieved on 18th January 2025
- Clynes, M. P., & Raftery, S. E. (2008). Feedback: An Essential Element of Student of Clinical Practice. *Nurse Education in Practice*, 405-411. From <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nepr.2008.02.003> Retrieved on 15th January 2025
- Dellos, R. (2015). Kahoot! A Digital Game for Learning. *International Journal of Technology and Distance Learning*, 49-52. From DOI:[10.3991/ijet.v13i02.7467](https://doi.org/10.3991/ijet.v13i02.7467) .Retrieved on 15th January 2025
- Felszeghy, S., Pasonen, S. S., Koskela, A., Naiminen, P., Harkonen, K., Paldanius, K. A., . . . Mahonen, A. (2019). Using Online Game-based Platforms to Improve Student Performance and Engagement in Histology Teaching. *BMC Medical Education*, 273. FromDOI: [10.1186/s12909-019-1701-0](https://doi.org/10.1186/s12909-019-1701-0) . Retrieved on 15th January 2025
- Hidayati. (2019). The Effect of Using Kahoot Game on Students' Vocabulary. *Language Edu (Journal of English Teaching and Learning)*, 1-10. From DOI: <https://doi.org/10.31004/jptam.v8i1.12524> Retrieved on 18th January 2025
- Hodson, L. (2017, 06 01). *Technology Review: Kahoot! In the Classroom (Education)*. From <https://artsintegration.com/2017/01/06technology-review-kahoot-classroom/> . Retrieved on 15th January 2025
- Hummer, W., & Rohimajaya, N. (2018). Using Flash Card as Instructional Media to Enrich the Students Vocabulary Mastery in Learning English. *Journal of English Language Studies*, 167-177. From DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.30870/jels.v3i2.3875>. Retrieved on 16th January 2025
- Huyen, N. T., & Nga, K. T. (2003). Learning Vocabulary Through Games: The Effectiveness of Learning Vocabulary Through Games. *The Asian EFL Journal*, 90-105. From http://www.asian-efl-journal.com/dec_03_st.pdf . Retrieved on 16th January 2025
- Iftode, D. (2019). Generation Z and Learning Style. *SEA- Practical Application of Science*, 255-259. From DOI:[10.18639/MERJ.2021.9900041](https://doi.org/10.18639/MERJ.2021.9900041). Retrieved on 16th January 2025
- Kalleney. (2020). Advantages of Kahoot! Game-based Formative Assessment and Methods of its Use and Application during Covid-19 in Pandemic. *Journal of Microscopy and Ultrastructure*, 4. From doi: [10.4103/JMAU.JMAU_61_20](https://doi.org/10.4103/JMAU.JMAU_61_20). Retrieved on 17th January 2025
- Manzoni, B., Caporarello, L., Cirulli, F., & Magni, F. (2021). The Preferred Learning Styles of Generation Z: Do They Differ from Ones of Previous Generations? In C. Metallo, M. Ferara, A. Lazzara.,&S.Za (Eds). *Digital Transformation and Human Behaviour; Springer International Publishing*, 55-67. From https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-47539-0_5. Retrieved on 17th January 2025

- Munawaroh, T. (2022). The Effect of Flash Card to Improve Simple English Vocabulary Mastery. *Jurnal Hukum, Sosial, dan Pendidikan*, 52. From <https://scholar.google.com>. Retrieved on 17th January 2025
- Neuman, S., & Dwyer. (2009). Missing in Action Vocabulary Instruction in Pre-K. *The Reading Teacher*, 384-392. From DOI: [10.1598/RT.62.5.2](https://doi.org/10.1598/RT.62.5.2). Retrieved on 18th January 2025
- Pah, D., & Kesi, A. K. (2023). The Use of Kahoot Game to Improve Students' Vocabulary at SDI Lasiana. *International Linguistics and TESOL Journal*, 56-58. From DOI: <https://doi.org/10.55637/iltes.2.2.9333.56-59> . Retrieved on 21th January 2025
- Parera, J., Lee, N., Win, K., Perera, J., & Wijesuriya, L. (2008). Formative Feedback to Students: The Mismatch between Faculty Perceptions and Student Expectation. *Medical Teacher*, 395-399. From DOI: [10.1080/01421590801949966](https://doi.org/10.1080/01421590801949966). Retrieved on 21th January 2025
- Sabandar, G. N., Supit, N. R., & Suryana, E. (2018). Kahoot! Bring the Fun into the Classroom. *I JIE (Indonesian Journal of Informatics Education)*, 127. From DOI: <https://doi.org/10.20961/ijie.v2i2.26244>. Retrieved on 21th January 2025
- Zheng, S. (2012). Studies and Suggestions on English Vocabulary Teaching and Learning. *English Language Teaching*, 129. From DOI: [10.5539/elt.v5n5p129](https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v5n5p129). Retrieved on 21th January 2025