

KAHOOT! IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING: UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS AND CHALLENGES EXPLORED

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Abstract

This qualitative case study investigates university students' perceptions and challenges related to the use of Kahoot! in English language learning. The study focuses on understanding how students perceive Kahoot! as a learning tool and the main challenges they face while using it. A total of 90 participants, consisting of 20 students from IAHN Gde Pudja Mataram and 70 from UIN Mataram, were purposively selected based on their experience with Kahoot in English courses. Data were collected through closed and open-ended questionnaires to provide a comprehensive understanding of their experiences.

The findings indicate overwhelmingly positive perceptions of Kahoot!, with participants expressing enthusiasm for its engaging format and its effectiveness in enhancing understanding of English language concepts. Qualitative responses highlighted how Kahoot! makes learning enjoyable and motivating, while the competitive aspect was seen as a valuable component of the learning experience. However, some challenges were identified, primarily related to internet connectivity and the pacing of questions. Despite these challenges, the overall sentiment suggests that the benefits of using Kahoot! in higher education contexts significantly outweigh the difficulties encountered. This study contributes to the growing body of research on gamification in language learning, emphasizing the potential of interactive tools like Kahoot! to enhance student engagement and learning outcomes in English language education.

Keywords: Challenges, English Language Learning, Gamification, Kahoot!, Perception

Introduction

In the realm of education, the integration of technology is not a recent phenomenon within the daily instructional practices. Over time, educators, who initially relied on traditional methods like chalkboard instruction, have transitioned towards leveraging computers to streamline the creation of instructional materials through available programs. Presently, various technological tools have become prevalent in educational settings, including the use of presentation software like PowerPoint and display mediums such as LCD projectors. Furthermore, there has been a notable surge in technological advancements in education, marked by the emergence of learning media developed by application creators, both freely accessible and subscription-based.

In today's educational environment, the use of interactive media in English language instruction has grown in significance (Gerashchenko, Shaposhnikova, Egorova, & Romanov, 2021). By offering students rich and captivating learning experiences, interactive media helps students become more actively involved in their education and improve their language proficiency. Additionally, interactive media provides students with a variety of opportunities to practice and apply language abilities in real-world settings (Sun, 2022). This enhances their speaking, listening, reading, and writing abilities as they engage with multimedia resources such as videos, audio recordings, online games, and interactive activities (Xu & Tsai, 2021).

Kahoot!, a game-based learning tool that aims to make learning engaging and fun, is one such platform that has grown in popularity. It offers an innovative and engaging method for students to participate in the learning process and improve their language proficiency. Students can actively engage in games, quizzes, and interactive activities on Kahoot that cover a variety

of topics related to the English language, including grammar, vocabulary, reading comprehension, listening skills, and pronunciation. Learning becomes more engaging and motivating with this gamified method, which enhances retention and comprehension of English language ideas (Qasserras & Qasserras, 2023).

Studies have also shown that Kahoot! is an effective tool for enhancing vocabulary knowledge, increasing learning engagement, and promoting dynamic engagement in the learning process (Sinnivasagam & Hua, 2023; Situmorang & Simajuntak, 2023). It has been found to be particularly beneficial for teaching vocabulary to English language learners, as it provides an enjoyable platform for assessment and facilitates vocabulary learning in a more effective manner (Hsia & Yamat, The Use of Kahoot and its Role in Improving Irregular Verbs Learning among Primary ESL Learners, 2022). Furthermore, a study conducted with undergraduate students in education found that integrating Kahoot! quizzes into the teaching process improved students' perception of certain concepts, increased their active participation in the lesson, and created a more interactive and stimulating learning environment (Campillo-Ferrer, Miralles-Martínez, & Sánchez-Ibáñez, 2020).

However, despite these promising results, challenges and barriers to integrating Kahoot! in higher education still exist. Research has shown that while students enjoy the gamified nature of Kahoot!, certain limitations can impede its effectiveness. In Bhuana's (2022) study, the main challenge faced by students in the implementation of Kahoot! is internet connection. Rajabpour (2021) also stated that the primary drawback of Kahoot! is that some students encounter technical difficulties or access problems during quizzes. Another issue lies in the fact that not all students benefit equally from the gamified learning environment. For instance, students who are less familiar with technology may find it challenging to navigate the platform, while others might feel pressure due to the competitive nature of the quizzes, which could negatively impact their learning experience (Wang & Tahir, 2020).

These barriers highlight the need for further research on how to effectively implement Kahoot! in higher education, particularly in English language learning. Understanding students' experiences and the obstacles they face can provide insights into how to optimize the use of this platform to enhance language learning outcomes. Therefore, this study seeks to explore the experiences of university students using Kahoot! in their English language learning journey, with a focus on identifying both the benefits and challenges of using the platform in higher education.

Research Method

This study adopts a qualitative case study approach, allowing for an in-depth exploration of the experiences and challenges faced by tertiary students using Kahoot! for English language learning. The case study design enables a holistic understanding of the phenomenon within its real-life context. Latief (2011) describes a case study as one of the qualitative research techniques used to examine a person, family, social group, social institution, or community in-depth in order to comprehend the unit's life cycle or an important component of it.

The participants of this study were purposively selected from a pool of tertiary students enrolled in English language courses, recruited based on their willingness to share their experiences and insights. A total of 90 participants were included in the study, comprising 20 students from IAHN Gde Pudja and 70 students from UIN Mataram. It is important to note that IAHN Gde Pudja has limitations as it does not offer an English major, which may impact the participants' experiences and perceptions of using Kahoot! in their learning. All participants had several experiences using Kahoot! in their English language courses at the university level, providing a valuable perspective on the platform's effectiveness and challenges in enhancing their learning experience.

The researcher used both closed and open-ended questionnaires: a closed-ended questionnaire, where the response options were provided, followed by open-ended questions to capture participants' thoughts and challenges in using Kahoot. The questionnaire will be

performed using Likert scale with a range scale from 1-5 which defines Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Neutral (N), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD). This point scale is to describe students' perceptions in utilizing Kahoot.

Results

In this section, the results gathered from the closed and open-ended questionnaires are presented to address the research objectives. The data provide insights into students' perceptions and experiences with using Kahoot! at the university level. The quantitative results from the closed-ended questions highlight overall trends and attitudes toward Kahoot!, while the qualitative responses from the open-ended questions offer deeper insights into the specific challenges and thoughts students faced. Together, these findings provide a comprehensive understanding of the tool's impact on student engagement and learning outcomes.

Table 1. Positive Perceptions on using Kahoot!

No	Statements	SA	A	N	D	SD
1	I look forward to playing Kahoot!	44	32	12	2	0
2	I felt excited when playing Kahoot!	45	31	11	3	0
3	It was easy to play Kahoot!	23	34	28	4	1
4	I found Kahoot! Fun	48	30	9	2	1
5	I enjoyed playing Kahoot!	40	35	12	2	1
6	Kahoot! enhanced my understanding of the subjects	42	32	13	1	2
7	I liked the competitiveness in our Kahoot! sessions	39	35	14	1	1
8	I wish Kahoot! was also used in other subjects	39	33	13	4	1
9	Kahoot! was an effective method to provide feedback	25	41	21	3	0
10	Kahoot! helps me retain new vocabulary or grammar concepts	33	41	11	4	1
11	Kahoot! should be used in higher education	20	25	33	7	5

The data presented in the table reflects participants' overwhelmingly positive perception of Kahoot! as a learning tool. A significant majority of respondents expressed enthusiasm for using Kahoot!, with 44 strongly agreeing and 32 agreeing that they look forward to playing it (Statement 1). Similarly, 45 participants strongly agreed that they felt excited while playing Kahoot! (Statement 2), further highlighting the engaging nature of the platform.

Most participants found Kahoot! to be enjoyable and fun, as seen in Statements 4 and 5, where 48 strongly agreed and 30 agreed that Kahoot! was fun, and 40 strongly agreed that they enjoyed playing it. Additionally, 42 strongly agreed that Kahoot! helped enhance their understanding of the subjects (Statement 6), showing that its appeal goes beyond entertainment and supports educational outcomes.

These results are supported by students' statements in the open-ended questionnaire;

S27: "It's really fun because we learn while playing."

S46: "I feel happy and not bored."

S54: "A very interesting media for student."

S90: "It's very enjoyable because when the class feels tense or boring, playing Kahoot makes the learning experience more engaging."

The competitive aspect of Kahoot! was also well-received, with 39 strongly agreeing and 35 agreeing that they liked the competitiveness in their Kahoot! sessions (Statement 7). Moreover, 39 strongly agreed that they wished Kahoot! was used in other subjects (Statement

8), and 33 agreed that it helped them retain new vocabulary or grammar concepts (Statement 10), showcasing the tool's versatility in fostering learning across different subject areas.

Several students underlined how Kahoot helps them in learning, such as;

S10: "Very good for training memory and also speed of thinking."

S18: "Very enjoyable and motivating for learning, as well as helpful in remembering vocabulary in English"

S33: "In my opinion, Kahoot is very suitable and I really like this method. It makes me more enthusiastic and challenged.:

S75: "In my opinion, it's very helpful, especially in terms of recalling vocabulary and other things in the form of a game. Not only can we remember vocabulary through the game, but as students, we also feel motivated and continuously challenged to win, and it turns out to be fun."

Overall, these results underline the overwhelmingly positive perception of Kahoot!, with many respondents affirming its role in making learning both enjoyable and effective.

In contrast to the overwhelmingly positive responses, the questionnaire also included items aimed at identifying any negative perceptions of Kahoot!. However, the results show that only a small portion of students responded negatively to the platform.

Table 2. Negative Perceptions on Using Kahoot!

No.	Statements	SA	A	N	D	SD
1	Kahoot! was a distraction to the real class activities	5	7	13	33	32
2	I feel that Kahoot! design is too childish for university students.	5	5	11	35	34
3	I feel that Kahoot! focuses too much on competition rather than actual learning	3	11	30	30	16

For instance, in response to the statement "Kahoot! was a distraction to the real class activities" (Statement 1), only 5 participants strongly agreed and 7 agreed, while the majority—33 disagreed and 32 strongly disagreed—felt that Kahoot! did not interfere with classroom learning. Similarly, the notion that Kahoot!'s design is too childish for university students (Statement 2) was largely dismissed by students, with 35 disagreeing and 34 strongly disagreeing, while only 5 strongly agreed and 5 agreed, indicating minimal concern about its suitability for higher education.

Lastly, in terms of the balance between competition and learning, the majority of respondents rejected the idea that Kahoot! focuses too much on competition rather than actual learning (Statement 3). Although 3 strongly agreed and 11 agreed with this statement, a significant number—30 disagreed and 16 strongly disagreed—believed that Kahoot! strikes a proper balance, with 30 remaining neutral. Furthermore, there were no additional statements from students on negative perceptions in learning by Kahoot.

These results suggest that negative perceptions of Kahoot! are limited to a small subset of students, further supporting the general trend of positive responses towards its use in university-level learning.

The analysis of challenges faced by students when using Kahoot! directly addresses research question number 2. The results indicate that while some difficulties exist, they are not uniformly experienced among participants.

Table 3. Challenges in using Kahoot!

No	Statements	SA	A	N	D	SD
1	Internet connection becomes a problem in using Kahoot!	15	20	37	14	4

2	I often experience difficulties accessing Kahoot! due to issues with my device	9	14	37	22	8
3	The time allocation to answer the questions in Kahoot! is too short	6	22	36	22	4
4	I often found the questions in Kahoot! to be unclear or confusing	4	6	21	40	19
5	The visual or auditory of Kahoot! often distracts me from focusing on the content	3	15	31	32	9
6	I find Kahoot!'s fast-paced format distracting or overwhelming	7	9	28	34	12

For instance, concerning internet connectivity issues (Statement 1), 15 participants strongly agreed and 20 agreed that such problems hindered their use of Kahoot!, while 37 remained neutral and 14 disagreed. This indicates that while some students encounter connectivity challenges, a considerable number either do not experience these issues or are indifferent. Similarly, regarding difficulties accessing Kahoot! due to device-related problems (Statement 2), 9 strongly agreed and 14 agreed, yet 37 participants remained neutral and 22 disagreed, suggesting that device issues are not a common barrier for most users.

In terms of time constraints, when participants were asked whether the time allocated to answer questions was too short (Statement 3), 6 strongly agreed and 22 agreed, while 36 were neutral and 22 disagreed. This suggests a varied perception of time pressure, with some students feeling that the pacing may be too rapid.

In response to the open-ended question about challenges in using Kahoot, most students mentioned issues with the internet connection and the limited time provided;

S1: "Poor signal and unsupported phone."

S19: "The available time is too short for questions that are more difficult, and not everyone may have adequate access to stay consistently connected to the internet."

S26: "Difficult to log in, slow internet, and sometimes it suddenly logs out."

S66: "The timer was pretty fast, I can't focus sometimes, worrying what the question was about and the fast timer."

Regarding the clarity of questions (Statement 4), only 4 participants strongly agreed and 6 agreed that questions were unclear or confusing. In contrast, 40 disagreed and 19 strongly disagreed, indicating that the majority found the questions to be clear and comprehensible.

When assessing whether the visual or auditory elements of Kahoot! were distracting (Statement 5), 3 strongly agreed and 15 agreed, while 31 were neutral and 32 disagreed, suggesting that most students did not find these aspects to be a distraction. Lastly, in evaluating the fast-paced format of Kahoot! (Statement 6), 7 strongly agreed and 9 agreed that it was distracting or overwhelming, while 28 were neutral and 34 disagreed, further indicating that many students did not perceive the pace as a significant challenge.

Overall, these findings highlight that while certain challenges do exist for some students, the majority report positive experiences with Kahoot!, suggesting that these challenges are not substantial barriers to effective learning. This nuanced understanding addresses the second research question by demonstrating that the positive aspects of Kahoot! generally outweigh the reported difficulties.

Discussion

The findings from the three tables provide a comprehensive view of students' perceptions and challenges regarding the use of Kahoot! in a university setting. Overall, the

results indicate a predominantly positive attitude towards the platform, with various aspects of its functionality and design being well-received by students.

Positive Perceptions

The first table illustrates that a significant majority of respondents look forward to playing Kahoot!, feel excited about it, and find it enjoyable. Statements indicating enthusiasm for the platform, such as “I look forward to playing Kahoot!” and “I found Kahoot! fun,” received high levels of agreement, underscoring the tool's effectiveness in engaging students. This aligns with the educational goal of fostering a dynamic learning environment, as Kahoot! successfully combines entertainment with educational content.

In Resmayani & Putra (2019), it is noted that most students appreciate the competitive environment and energy created by the game. Feedback from students and survey results indicate that Kahoot! aids them in grasping fundamental concepts of the course while enjoying the activity. The game is recognized as an enjoyable, free, flexible, easy, and fun method for engaging with introductory English in higher education. All students emphasize that the teacher should continue incorporating this gamification approach in the future.

Additionally, many participants noted that Kahoot! enhances their understanding of subjects and retains new vocabulary or grammar concepts, highlighting its educational value beyond mere enjoyment. This aligns with the findings of Hsia and Yamat's (2022) study, which demonstrated that Kahoot is highly effective for teaching English irregular verbs and has shown a positive effect on students' acquisition of these verbs.

The findings on Table 1 also show that students appreciate the competitive aspect of Kahoot!, which contributes to their engagement and motivation. The results from Kurniawan et al. (2024) also show that students are more motivated and interested in learning the language more deeply in this relaxed environment. Moreover, Aidoune et al. (2022) concluded that students find Kahoot to be more engaging, motivating, and entertaining for learning English. They also view Kahoot as highly addictive. It enhances learners' confidence and motivation, while encouraging them to better understand the material and supports self-directed learning.

However, while there are some negative perceptions, they were minimal in comparison to the positive feedback, indicating a general consensus on the platform's benefits.

Negative Perceptions

Despite the overall positive reception, the second table reveals that certain challenges exist. While most students reported minimal distractions from class activities due to Kahoot!, a small percentage indicated that internet connectivity issues and device-related difficulties affected their experience. The mixed responses regarding time constraints suggest that some students feel the pacing may be too fast, which could hinder their ability to respond thoughtfully to questions. However, a large number remained neutral on these issues, indicating that while challenges exist, they do not universally impact all users. Rather than being a constraint in using Kahoot, Khairisya & Daulay, (2022) argue that the time limit for answering each quiz question reduces the likelihood of students discussing with their peers.

Regarding the clarity of questions, the majority of students found them to be clear, although a small subset expressed concerns about confusion. This feedback highlights the importance of designing clear and comprehensible questions to maximize the effectiveness of Kahoot! in educational settings.

Balancing Engagement and Learning

The third table further elaborates on the challenges faced by students, particularly in relation to the design and fast-paced nature of Kahoot!. On the other side, the challenges elaborated in the open-ended questionnaire mostly concerns on internet connection and limited time. Bhuna (2022) affirmed that since Kahoot is an online application with a vibrant display, it demands a significant amount of data bandwidth. Therefore, a reliable internet connection is essential.

While some participants felt that the competitive environment could overshadow learning, the majority disagreed, suggesting that students perceive a balance between

competition and educational value. The concerns about distractions from the visual and auditory elements of Kahoot! were also minimal, indicating that most students are able to focus on the content presented.

In conclusion, the data suggest that while Kahoot! presents some challenges, its overall impact on student engagement and learning is overwhelmingly positive. The enthusiasm for its use and the enjoyment derived from gameplay indicate that Kahoot! is an effective educational tool. However, addressing the noted challenges—particularly related to internet connectivity, pacing, and question clarity—can further enhance its implementation in higher education. Future research could explore strategies to mitigate these challenges, ensuring that Kahoot! continues to serve as a valuable resource for engaging students in their learning journey.

Conclusion

This study examined university students' perceptions and challenges related to the use of Kahoot! as an interactive learning tool. The findings reveal a predominantly positive attitude towards Kahoot!, with students expressing enthusiasm and excitement about its engaging and competitive features. The platform was found to enhance understanding and retention of course material, highlighting its effectiveness in fostering a dynamic learning environment.

Despite the overall favorable feedback, certain challenges were identified, including issues related to internet connectivity, device access, and the pace of gameplay. While a minority of students reported that these factors hindered their experience, the majority indicated that such challenges did not significantly detract from the overall benefits of using Kahoot!. Moreover, concerns about the clarity of questions and potential distractions from its design were minimal, suggesting that most students were able to effectively focus on the learning objectives.

In conclusion, Kahoot! demonstrates considerable potential as a valuable educational tool in higher education. The positive perceptions and high levels of engagement reported by students affirm its role in enhancing the learning experience. However, addressing the identified challenges, particularly in terms of connectivity and pacing, will be crucial for maximizing its effectiveness. Future research should aim to develop strategies that can further improve the implementation of Kahoot! in academic settings, ensuring that it continues to support student engagement and learning outcomes effectively.

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