

Students' Attitudes on Gamification in English Reading Classes: The Use of Kahoot!

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Abstract

This study explores students' reflective attitudes of using Kahoot! in their reading classes, with a focus on its effects on engagement, motivation, and reading comprehension. A qualitative research design was used to collect data from ten students using semi-structured interviews and classroom observations. The findings show that Kahoot! significantly increased student engagement by making learning of reading interactive and enjoyable. Students also reported increased motivation and a more positive attitude toward reading, largely due to the game-based nature of the platform. Moreover, Kahoot! was also found to enhance reading comprehension since it assisted students focus on the important points in the text through repeated exposure and immediate feedback. The study also highlighted how Kahoot!'s encouragement of friendly competition and peer interaction contributed to a more dynamic and collaborative learning environment. Nevertheless, technical challenges were identified as a limitation, negatively impacting the platform's overall effectiveness, particularly those pertaining to internet connectivity. These findings indicate that while Kahoot! provides significant educational benefits, its effective implementation in the classrooms depends on a stable technical infrastructure. The study enhances understanding of the role of game-based learning tools in education and suggests the need for further investigation into students' long-term effects on academic performance.

INTRODUCTION

Technology integration has become essential in the evolving education landscape for enhancing teaching approaches and improving student learning outcomes. One significant development in this area is the use of gamification, which refers to the application of game-design elements to open up new possibilities for teachers to apply, whether in traditional classrooms or online learning environments. Gamified learning tools are gaining popularity for its potential to increase student engagement and motivation by transforming traditional learning into more interactive and enjoyable experiences (Licorish et al., 2018; Lofti & Pratolo, 2021; Yang & Bae, 2022). One such tool is Kahoot!, an online game-based platform widely used in educational settings to conduct real-time quizzes, discussions, reviews, and assessments.

In English language classrooms, particularly in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) settings, one notable application, Kahoot! are believed as promising tools for learning due to their interactive nature, which promotes active involvement and immediate feedback. Research studies by Plump and LaRosa (2017) and Mahbud (2020) indicate that the use of Kahoot! significantly promotes classroom dynamics, increases student participation, and improves focus. Similarly, Wang and Tahir (2020) conducted a systematic review of 93 studies and concluded that Kahoot! contributes positively to learning achievement, engagement, classroom interaction, and motivation. This is particularly relevant in reading comprehension classes, where keeping student motivation can be challenging.

Reading comprehension is one of the fundamental skills in language learning. Yet, traditional teaching methods such as silent reading, reading aloud, text-based inquiry, and teacher-led explanations may not adequately foster engagement and students involvement within the classroom. As mentioned by Supriyanti and Marlina (2023) the monotonous nature of traditional reading instruction frequently leads to decreased attention and learning retention. In contrast, incorporating gamification into reading instruction is regarded as an alternative way to make learning of reading more dynamic and student-centered (Lofti & Pratolo, 2021; Yang & Bae, 2022).

Numerous studies has explored the benefits of gamification in language learning. For example, studies by Cadet (2023) and Nikou and Economides (2018) have posited that gamified platforms like Kahoot! are effective in increasing students' learning outcomes and creating engaging classroom environments and promoting students' motivation. Moreover, Cameron and Bizo (2019) and Mahbubah and Anam (2022) found that students using Kahoot! were more enthusiastic and attentive during reading activities, leading to better comprehension. On the other hand, despite these encouraging findings, many studies do not delve further into students' in-depth attitudes, particularly how Kahoot! support their reading skills beyond surface-level engagement.

Additionally, various challenges need to be acknowledged. Different levels of technological literacy, problems with internet connectivity, and limited access to digital devices, can influence the effectiveness of Kahoot! integration in the classroom (Bicen & Kocakoyun, 2018). Relatedly, Azhar and Iqbal (2018) emphasize, not all students respond to gamified environments in the same way; while others thrive in competitive, fast-paced settings, others may feel pressured or nervous. Therefore, it is crucial to gain a deeper understanding of students' perspectives and preferences concerning gamification in reading instruction or classroom. Moreover, empirical studies on qualitative inquiry into reading-specific gamification attitudes are underexplored.

To address this gap, this study explores the attitudes of students about using Kahoot! in reading comprehension classes. It focuses on how this tool impacts their engagement, motivation, comprehension skills, and peer interactions. Using a qualitative research design comprising interviews and classroom observations, this study intends to investigate students' experiences and attitudes. By understanding their attitudes, teachers and curriculum designers can make well-informed decisions about incorporating gamified learning platforms into language instruction. Hence, this study is guided by the following research question: "How do students perceive the use of Kahoot! in reading comprehension classes, and in what ways does it influence their engagement, motivation, and comprehension?"

METHOD

This section outlines the methodology employed to investigate students' attitudes of utilizing Kahoot! in reading classes. In order to obtain a comprehensive understanding of students' subjective experiences,

attitudes, and reflections, a qualitative approach was employed. The following section is organized into the following sub-sections: research design, research participants, research setting, data collection procedures, research instruments, and data analysis.

Research Design

This study used a qualitative research design, more precisely, a descriptive qualitative approach. As stated by Creswell and Poth (2018), qualitative research is appropriate for investigating complex human experiences and acquiring rich, detailed descriptions. In line with this aim, this study focused on gathering qualitative data through semi-structured interviews and classroom observations. The rationale for choosing a qualitative approach lies in the exploratory nature of the research question, aims to understand not only what students think about the usage of Kahoot! in reading classes but also why and how these attitudes are formed.

Research Participants

Ten second-semester students majoring in English Language Education at a state university in Indonesia participated in this study. The selection of participants in this study was based on purposive sampling. This technique allows researchers to select participants who are particularly experienced with the use of Kahoot! in their reading class. In addition, all participants had at least one semester of experience with Kahoot! being integrated into their reading class. The participants comprised students with different proficiency levels in English to ensure diversity in attitudes and contribute to the data's richness. Prior to data collection, informed consent was obtained from each student to guarantee voluntary participation.

Research Setting

The study was carried out at a state university in Indonesia. The study took place in a regular reading class where Kahoot! was integrated by the teachers as an additional digital tool to enhance engagement and facilitate comprehension activities. The setting was selected due to its natural environment, which is in line with the natures of qualitative research that emphasize the study of phenomena in authentic or real-world settings.

Data Collection Procedures

Data were collected through two primary qualitative techniques, namely semi-structured interviews and classroom observations. By combining these techniques, the researchers were able to capture both students' spoken feelings and behavioral evidence of their engagement and interactions with the Kahoot! platform. Semi-structured interviews were done with 10 students who volunteered to share their experiences with the use of Kahoot! in greater depth. Each interview lasted approximately 20 minutes. The interview was conducted in either Indonesian or English, depending on the student's preference. Open-ended questions about students' attitudes, experiences, motivations, challenges, and suggestions about the use of Kahoot! in the reading class were intended to stimulate conversation.

In regard to the classroom observation, it was carried out during six reading sessions where Kahoot! was integrated actively. The focus of the observation notes were students' participation, engagement patterns, peer interactions, and teacher facilitation. Observational data provided a real-time view of classroom dynamics, supported and validated the interview findings.

Research Instruments

The main instruments used in this study were an interview guide and an observation checklist. The interview guide covering questions such as: "How do you feel about using Kahoot! in your reading class?", "What are the benefits of using Kahoot! for you?", and "How does Kahoot! impact your motivation or reading comprehension?" Exploratory questions were used to obtain further clarification when needed. Moreover, the observation checklist included indicators such as student engagement (e.g.,

attention, enthusiasm), peer interaction, and feelings of enjoyment or frustration. The instruments were adapted from prior literature on student engagement with digital tools by Hyland (2007) and Godwin-Jones (2023).

Data Analysis

The data analysis in this study employed thematic analysis framework proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006) involving six steps: 1) familiarizing data; 2) creating initial codes; 3) searching for themes; 4) reviewing themes; 5) defining and naming themes; and 6) reporting narratively. The results of interviews were fully transcribed along with observation notes. Then, they were coded using both inductive and deductive coding approaches. Inductive coding allowed themes to develop naturally from the data, where as deductive coding was directed by constructs classified in the literature such as motivation, engagement, interactivity, and comprehension (Chien et al., 2023; Liu et al., 2023). In addition, triangulation was used to establish reliability by comparing themes from data interviews with observational evidence.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the findings of the study that explored students' attitudes of using Kahoot! in their reading classes. The data were gathered through semi-structured interviews with selected participants and classroom observation. The findings are categorized into five different classifications covering: 1) student engagement and motivation; 2) reading comprehension enhancement; 3) peer interaction and competition; 4) technical challenges; and 5) classroom observation insights. The inclusion of direct quotes from participant statements and observation notes are included to improve the depth of understanding and support the interpretations.

Student Engagement and Motivation

The majority of students expressed that Kahoot! greatly increased their reading class engagement. They remained attentive and enthusiastic during the lessons because of the platform's interactive and game-based nature. Student stated that Kahoot! made them look forward to reading class as it was more enjoyable than traditional reading quizzes, as described below.

"Before using Kahoot!, I felt sleepy during reading class. But now, I feel excited to participate because it feels like a game." (Student 2)

"It's competitive and fun. I try to answer fast and correct to be on the leader board, which makes me more active in class." (Student 4)

Based on the results above, this study revealed that Kahoot! significantly boosted student involvement and motivation during reading classes. This is in line with previous studies that highlights the effectiveness of game-based learning to increase students participation and enthusiasm. As Chiang (2020), Michos (2017), Nuri et al. (2022), and Yang et al. (2019) confirm that using game-based like Kahoot! in the classroom features, such as competition and immediate feedback, might increase student engagement and encourage active participation. In this study, students reported that Kahoot! enhanced the enjoyable and interaction of reading

classes. Moreover, one student described the experience as more fun than traditional quizzes, which suggests that Kahoot! platforms contributed to a more engaging learning environment.

The positive impact of Kahoot! on student motivation is also supported by the findings of Yang and Bae (2022), who indicated that Kahoot! platforms motivate students to actively participated in learning and improve their learning outcomes. The competitive nature of Kahoot! can develop a sense of excitement and positive competition among students. Consequently, this can enhance their motivation to read, reinforce understanding, and improve their reading skills to perform well in the quizzes. According to Bicen and Kocakyun (2018), Kahoot!, competitive components, music, and other enjoyable games have enhanced students' participation and a sense of accomplishment. By introducing a competitive element through the leader board, Kahoot! encouraged students to answer quickly and accurately. This competitive aspect, while enhancing motivation, also cultivated a fun atmosphere in the classroom, allowing students to feel more connected to the learning process.

Improvement in Reading Comprehension

The results of this study in regard to students' improvement in reading comprehension suggest that Kahoot! helped students understand reading materials better. By using multiple-choice questions based on texts, students were urged to read carefully and understand the content of the texts. Repetition and immediate feedback facilitated to supporting learning. Students emphasized how quizzes in Kahoot! helped them focus on main points of the reading text, as presented below.

"The questions in Kahoot! helped me to remember important parts of the reading. Sometimes I missed the main idea, but after several Kahoot! sessions, I started to get better." (Student 1)

"Kahoot! makes me think quickly and understand what the question is asking, so I read more carefully now." (Student 3)

The results above showed that Kahoot! had a positive effect on students' reading comprehension. By using multiple-choice questions drawn from reading texts, students were encouraged to focus on important ideas and read thoroughly. Consistent with the results of this study, Medina and Hurtado (2017) and Sartini (2020) used Kahoot! as a formative assessment to investigate students' achievement in reading comprehension skills. The findings of their study showed that the application of Kahoot! influenced students' achievement in terms of their reading skills. Moreover, Tao and Zou (2022) discovered that interactive quizzes could help reinforce reading comprehension skills. Kahoot! immediate feedback further strengthened learning, allowing students to quickly identify areas of weakness and correct mistakes.

Students in this study also reported that Kahoot! quizzes helped them remember significant aspects from the reading texts and prompted them to reread texts they initially missed. This result supports previous studies that emphasizes the role of repetition and immediate feedback in improving comprehension. For example, Lofti & Pratolo (2021)

highlighted that timely feedback is essential for improving student learning, as it enables them to recognize their mistakes and make the required corrections. Another study by Korkmaz and Oz (2021) found that using Kahoot! in teaching English reading comprehension positively impacted students' reading proficiency. Thus, it is important to note that Kahoot! is suitable for use in the reading class as it promotes active reading and comprehension.

Peer Interaction and Positive Competition

Students found Kahoot! was helpful for promoting communication and friendly competition. They were more motivated to perform better because they were able to see their classmates' scores. They also reported that the activity made them more connected to their classmates. Even though the competitive element was dominant, students expressed that it remained a positive experience as noted by the following student.

"Even though I don't always win, it's fun to try. We also talk about the questions after class, so we learn from each other." (Student 7)

"I think Kahoot! helps me talk more with friends and enjoy the game. It makes reading class more fun and exciting." (Student 5)

Based on the students' response, this study found that Kahoot! fostered peer interaction and encouraged positive competition among students. Students were inspired to engage with one to another and develop a sense of community by being able to see their classmates' scores in real time. This results suggest that social aspect of Kahoot! played a crucial role in encouraging collaborative learning. In accordance with this finding, as a pivotal part of Kahoot! is social interaction, some studies found that Kahoot! increases interactivity among students (Hou, 2018; Mustafa et al., 2018; Wang & Tahir, 2020).

Moreover, Anderson and Pierce (2019) found that students who engaged in game-based learning activities improved their communication and teamwork skills. In line with this results study, students reported discussing the questions in Kahoot! after class, allowing them to share ideas and gain knowledge from each other. This peer interaction not only improved their understanding of the material but also fostered a positive and supportive learning atmosphere.

Technical Challenges

Despite the positive response, students identified numerous challenges, notably with internet connectivity. Some students experienced delays in loading questions or getting disconnected, which caused frustration and affected their performance as noted by student below.

"Sometimes the Wi-Fi is slow, and I cannot answer in time. It makes me feel a bit left out when others are already answering." (Student 10)

“When the internet is weak, I can't join the quiz properly. I often miss the chance to answer, and my friends are already ahead of me.” (Student 6)

These responses indicate that the challenging nature of Kahoot! for learning reading that may be encountered is a poor internet connection. Despite the students' positive attitudes of Kahoot!, students reported some technical challenges, particularly dealing with internet connectivity, which can affect the speed of responding to the quiz. Several students stated that slow Wi-Fi or disconnections during the quiz, which could negatively affect their learning. This finding has also been informed in previous studies on the limitations of digital learning tools, where poor internet connection was identified as obstacles to successful use (Chiang, 2020; Lofti & Pratolo, 2021; Susanto & Suparmi, 2024; Wang & Tahir, 2020).

The internet connectivity issue emphasizes the importance of ensuring a stable and reliable technical infrastructure such as Wi-Fi when applying digital tools like Kahoot! in the classroom. To address these challenges, schools or universities should provide high-quality internet connectivity and make sure students have access to the appropriate devices as consistent connectivity enables students to access and participate in quizzes and activities efficiently, without experiencing delays that could affect their learning experience. In addition, teachers could consider using Kahoot! in offline mode or providing students with access to preloaded content in case of connectivity concerns. By acknowledging this challenge and modifying the strategy, teachers can effectively utilize Kahoot! to improve students' reading skills.

Classroom Observation Insights

Classroom observations conducted during implementing Kahoot! further supported the interview results. During sessions, students were obviously more engaged, participating eagerly, and responding immediately to questions. Their body language indicated attentiveness and enthusiasm, with many smiling and showing signals of excitement when a new quiz began.

The teacher also mentioned increased participation, even from students who were usually passive in traditional settings. Following the quizzes, students were observed discussing questions with their classmates, indicating increased engagement and peer learning. Furthermore, it was evident that using Kahoot! contributed to a dynamic classroom environment in which students were more collaborative and focused.

In a specific observation, when Kahoot! was used to review a text, students were observed reading their text more carefully before responding, demonstrating deeper reading behavior. Another significant observation was that students responded positively to leader board updates, with several students motivating and encouraging one another.

Implications for Educational Practice

The findings of this study have some implications for educational practice. First, they argue that Kahoot! can be a useful tool for increasing student engagement, motivation, and comprehension in reading classes. Its interactive features and real-time or immediate feedback

make it an excellent tool for encouraging active learning and improving academic performance. However, teachers must be aware of potential technical challenges and ensure that adequate assistance is in place to minimize disruptions during class.

Second, the positive peer interaction shown in this study emphasizes Kahoot!'s potential to foster a collaborative learning environment. Teachers can use Kahoot!'s features to encourage teamwork and provide opportunity for students to participate in meaningful discussions. This could lead to a more supportive classroom environment in which students collaborate to achieve common learning objectives. Finally, while the competitive element of Kahoot! is a significant motivator, teachers should consider about integrating a balance of competition and collaboration into their teaching methods. This ensures that all students, regardless of performance, feel motivated and supported.

CONCLUSION

This study investigated students' attitudes of utilizing Kahoot! in reading classes, enlightening several key findings. The findings revealed that Kahoot! significantly increased student engagement, motivation, and reading comprehension, with students expressing enthusiasm for its interactive and game-based aspect. The use of Kahoot! also promoted positive peer interaction and competition, resulting in a more dynamic and collaborative classroom environment. However, the study discovered technical issues, particularly related to internet connectivity, that affected the smooth integration of Kahoot! in some cases. This study contributes to the expanding body of knowledge on the use of game-based learning tools in education, highlighting their potential to improve academic outcomes while also emphasizing the significance of technical infrastructure for successful implementation. Future researchers could examine the long-term impact of Kahoot! on student performance and explore its impact across different language skills or educational contexts. Overall, this study reveals that while Kahoot! can be a beneficial tool for improving student learning, it requires careful preparation and consideration of technical requirements to maximize its effectiveness in the classroom.

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