# Using Kahoot Technology in Teaching English

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**Abstract:** Is the most popular game-based learning platform among language teachers. In this article dedicated learning the effects of the Kahoot for learning English. The article presents the results of the using Kahoot! for learning and more specifically, on how Kahoot! effects learners, performance, engagement and motivation.

**Keywords:** Kahoot!, student response system, game based learning, teaching English, innovation technology, effects.

## Introduction

It is difficult to keep the students'concentration and engagementduring the lessons. Lack of motivation can result in a reduction of learning outcomes and a negative atmosphere in the classroom. This challenge is usually even a bigger problem in higher education with little interaction in mixed-ability groups. Educational research has shown that students who are actively involved in the learning activity will learn more than passive students. There are multiple approaches for making lectures more interactive, including breaking the class into smaller groups, questioning the audience, using studentresponse systems (SRS), introduce cases the students can work on, use written material, organizing debates, reaction panels and guest talks, using simulations and role-plays, using video, audiovisual aids, and learning technologies. [1] Game-based learning is another advancement in learning technology. Well-designed video games are efficient learning machines, as they motivate and engage the players in such a way that they are learning without Most teachers acknowledge that it is a challenge to keep the students' motivation, engagement, and concentration over time in a lecture. Lack of motivation can result in a reduction of learning outcomes and a negative atmosphere in the classroom. [2] This challenge is usually even a bigger problem in higher education with big classes with little interaction. Educational research has shown that students who are actively involved in the learning activity will learn more than passive student. [3] Further, there is extensive evidence that student engagement in lectures improves understanding and academic results. There are multiple approaches for making lectures more interactive, including breaking the class into smaller groups, questioning the audience, using audience responses (systems), introduce cases the students can work on, use written material, organizing debates, reaction panels and guest talks, using simulations and role-plays, using video, audiovisual aids, and using effective presentation skills. Student response systems (SRSs) were developed in the sixties as a solution to make large classes more interactive, and SRSs have been used in classrooms since the early seventies. The SRSs have been found to have a positive impact on classroom dynamics, student and teacher perceptions, and learning performance. [4]. The advancement in technical infrastructure in schools and that most students bring their own digital devices to school has provided new ways of interacting in the classroom. Another advancement in learning technology is game-based learning. James Paul Gee argues that well-designed video games are efficient learning machines, as they motivate and engage the players in such a way that they are learning without being aware of it. [5] Games can be beneficial for academic achievement, motivation, and classroom dynamics.[6] Several SRSs have introduced game-features to increase the engagement of the students, such as the Space Race games in Socrative and Quizlet. However, Kahoot! was the

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first SRS designed to provide a game experience using game design principles from theory on intrinsic motivation and gameflow. Kahoot! is, therefore, a combination of using audience responses, role-plays and, using video and audiovisual aids. The motivation for this literature study was to investigate the effect of combining the concept of a student response system and a video game. Although other SRSs include game-features, as far as we know, only Kahoot! has been designed from ground up as a video game. [7]

The concept of Kahoot! is to combine an SRS, the existing technical infrastructure in schools, the fact that students are bringing their own digital devices, social networking, and gaming into one learning platform. The goal of Kahoot! is to increase engagement, motivation, enjoyment, and concentration to improve learning performance and classroom dynamics. Boredom in a computer learning environment can cause inferior learning and problem behavior. [8] Kahoot! is a game-based learning platform used to review students' knowledge, for formative assessment or as a break from traditional classroom activities. The platform is among the most popular within game-based learning, with over 70 million monthly active unique users and used by 50% of US K-12 students. As of 2019, over 2.5 billion people from more than 200 countries have played Kahoot! Since the platform was released in 2013, there have been published many studies on the effect of using Kahoot! in the classroom, but so far, there has not been any analysis of the results published by these studies at large. [9] This article presents the results of a literature review on the effect of using Kahoot! for learning. The literature review investigates how Kahoot! affects the students' learning performance compared to other teaching methods and tools, if it affects the classroom dynamics, if it affects the students' motivation, engagement, concentration, and enjoyment, and how teachers perceive the use of the platform. [10] Some teachers are afraid of introducing competitive gaming such as Kahoot! into the classroom, as they believe it can increase student anxiety. This study also investigates how Kahoot! affects students' anxiety. The rest of this article is organized as follows. Section 2 presents the game-based student response system Kahoot! related work, the research goal, the research questions, and the research approach. Section 3 presents the results. Section 4 discusses the results found, as well as the validity of the results. Finally, Section 5 concludes the article. [11]

**Methods**

This section presents the game-based student response system Kahoot! the related work, and the research questions and the research approach.

*Kahoot! – A game-based student response system* Kahoot! is a game-based student response system where the classroom is temporarily transformed into a game show where the teacher is the game show host, and the students are the contenders. The platform is a result of the Lecture Quiz research project initiated at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology in 2006, where multiple prototypes were developed and evaluated through experiments over several years. [12] Experiments with the early prototypes showed that Lecture Quiz increased student motivation, engagement, and perceived learning through entertaining social learning activities. [13] In fall 2012, a start-up company was founded to develop a new game-based learning platform from the ground up named Kahoot! based on Lecture Quiz. The Kahoot! game-based learning platform was released in September 2013. Essential requirements for the platform was that it should be straightforward for teachers to create own content, play quizzes and assess the students, and for the students to join without need to register, play without embarrassment (anonymously), have fun, be competitive, and learn. More information about how to create a kahoot, play a kahoot, and various uses of a GSRP can be found in Appendix B, C, and D, respectively.[14]

**Discussion**

Student response systems (SRSs) have been around since the sixties, and started to be used in the early seventies in teaching biology and chemistry. Since that time, several studies on SRSs have been published with findings including improved classroom dynamics, positive perceptions from students and instructors, and positive effect on exams; students more likely to work on problems in class; [15] increased student attendance; and improving classroom environment, learning and assessment. Our

literature review aims at investigating how a game-based SRS will affect the classroom environment, learning, the students, and the teacher. When Kahoot! was launched, it distinguished itself from the rest of SRSs as it had a strong focus on being a game-based platform, and thus can be classified as a Game-based Student Response System (GSRS). However, since its launch, several SRSs have included game-features as a part of their platform. One platform sharing many of the same characteristics with Kahoot! is Socrative. [14] Socrative provides a real-time formative assessment to collect data from the students through forms and offers the game Space Race, where teams of students answer questions to move their rocket as fast as possible across the screen. Another example is Quizlet, where students can study various topics through Flashcards, a speller, tests, and a Space Race game where the player can kill moving terms by answering the correct word.

Quizlet focuses on spelling words and giving the correct definition for words. Quizizz is game-based learning platform similar to Kahoot! where the main difference is that both the questions and the answers are shown on the student devices, it is not necessary to use a projected screen, and answering sessions are not synchronized meaning that a student does not have to wait for other fellow students before continuing to the next question. Poll Everywhere is an SRS for collecting audience responses in real-time to multiple-choice or open questions that recently have added game features similar to Kahoot! through Poll Everywhere Competitions. [16] There are also several SRSs available that does not offer game features such as Learning Catalytics which makes it possible for students to give numerical, algebraic, textual or graphical responses; Clicker that can be integrated with learning management systems and presentation tools (such as PowerPoint) and where the students both can respond using specialized iClicker remotes or web-based clients; and Plicker where the students give their responses using Plicker cards with a unique pattern for each student that can be rotated to give four different responses recognized by a camera on the teacher's digital device. The main difference between all the systems mentioned above is that Kahoot! focuses more on engagement through a competitive gaming experience. In the search for literature, four literature reviews where Kahoot! was mentioned were found. In a literature review researching trends in student response systems, the benefits of SRSs were summarized to be to provide interactivity, improve academic performance, and engagement, while the challenges are waiting time, academic inefficacy, and practical drawbacks. Kahoot! is mentioned related to the future of SRS, where it states: "On the other hand, some SRS applications such as Kahoot! have synthesized the best aspects of SRS and smartphone applications by introducing a competitive game element to SRS". Another literature review examined the benefits and limitations related to computer game-based foreign language learning, where it was found that this approach seems to be especially effective in vocabulary acquisition. The advantages were higher motivation and increased engagement. At the same time, the disadvantages were a lack of students' concentration on vocabulary acquisition and learning, inappropriate choice of games not relevant, and unfamiliarity of computer games among teachers and their unwillingness and anxiety to use them. Kahoot! was mentioned as a game-based platform useful for foreign language learning. Further, one literature review looked at online formative assessments and focused on diverse delivery methods and psychological benefits. [17] In this study, Kahoot! was described as a game-like student response system more dynamic than some other tools with the support for video, pictures, music, scoring, and ranking. The benefits of using online formative assessment tools include gains in achievement scores, and the development of essential complex cognitive processes, such as self-regulation. Finally, one literature review studied publications from 2009 to 2018 on mobile-based assessments.[18] The findings in this article include that most of the reviewed articles reported a significant positive impact on student learning performance, motivation, and attitude and that more research is needed to investigate issues and concerns related to negative perceptions against mobile assessment, especially from the teachers' point of view. One study on Kahoot! was included in this review, which investigated the effect of frequent use of a GSRS over time. [19] This review has a similar theme as our review, focusing on the impact of mobile-based assessment on learning, motivation, and students' and teachers' attitudes and perceptions. The main difference that focuses on mobile-based assessment in general and our review only on the game-based mobile-based assessment platform Kahoot! and that their study included only a limited number of major referred ed-tech journals.[20]

As I found out, Kahoot! is a free online platform for creating and running learning games.

It can be used to create multiple-choice questions with embedded pictures and videos. Teachers can either create their own Kahoots or search for publicly available games. There are tons of Kahoots out there based on specific textbooks such as New English File or specific grammar points. You can also check out trending Kahoots as well as most popular ones, although bear in mind that not all of them will be related to language learning – Kahoot! is popular in all learning environments and subjects including regular school subjects like chemistry or math.[21]

You can revise grammar, vocabulary, functional language, trivia or even phonology using Kahoot! It's true that the multiple-choice format somewhat limits your options, but you can get creative and use it to your advantage. [22]

Here are some things you can do using the MCQ format:

➢ You can make true/false or yes/no questions.

➢ You can ask which sentence is grammatically correct/incorrect.

➢ You can have the students choose odd word/sentence out

➢ Ask questions about synonyms, opposites and examples (or not examples – e.g. which sentence below is NOT an example of passive voice)

➢ Include more than one correct answer to make the task harder

I used this Kahoot in a first lesson with a new B1 group as a fun way to break the ice and to revise some topics they might have covered in their previous courses. After every question we stopped and discussed the answers. For example, one of the questions was: *Which of these countries are not in Europe*? The answer choices were *Spain, Argentina, France, Switzerland*. After learning the correct answer and laughing about how some students didn't see NOT and chose the wrong answer, we talked about which language(s) were spoken in each country, and how Swiss is a nationality but not a language and how it is often confused with Swedish, which is both a nationality and a language. [22]

### Results

The results showed many positive effects for the gamified approach, including improved class attendance, less late arrivals to class, higher downloads of course material, improved classroom dynamics, and higher final grade (61% for gamified vs. 53% for traditional). Another example is a quasi-experiment where one group received traditional teaching using paper, while the other received technology-supported learning using Voki, Buncee, Kahoot! and Answergarden. [23] Both groups performed the same on the pre-test, but the technology-supported learning group performed significantly better on the post-test (scored 90%) compared to those who used paper (scored 75%). Of the thirty-six studies investigating the learning outcome of only using Kahoot! for teaching, six are in the K-12 context (Primary, Secondary, and High School), while the rest are with university students. The studies are both qualitative and quantitative, where the majority can be classified as quasi-experiments. These studies covers a wide range of fields and courses including language (English and Chinese), Information Technology, Bio-Engineering, Media and Communication, Electric Circuits, Business, Math, Physics, Chemistry, Animal Science, Academic Writing, Educational Technology, Nursing, Vocational Training, Programming, Control systems, and Earth Science. Seventy percent of studies with statistical significance tests on learning effect show that Kahoot! significantly improves the final grade or test results compared to other teaching approaches. However, there are some exceptions. In an experiment in an Information Technology course, Kahoot! did not result in a significantly improved learning effect compared to using a paper quiz and the Clicker student response system. Similar results were found in a quasi-experiment comparing performance of Kahoot! and SurveyMonkey, in an experiment comparing PowerPoint and Kahoot! a quasi-experiment in a Middle School investigating the effect of Kahoot! vs. traditional teaching and in an experiment comparing traditional teaching with Quizizz and Kahoot!. In one study where Kahoot! was used for teaching

Chinese, using Kahoot! had a significant improvement in the competences of reading and speaking, but not for listening nor vocabulary. [24]

**Conclusion**

This article has presented a literature review on the effect of using Kahoot! for learning, where 93 studies were included. The goal of the article was to find answers to the following five research questions: *Research question one* asked about the learning effect from using Kahoot! and forty-eight studies were found that covered this topic. [28] The main conclusion is that *Kahoot! can have a positive effect on learning compared to traditional learning and other learning tools and approaches and for various contexts and domains*. It was found that Kahoot! had a positive effect on learning both for K-12 and higher education, as well as for language learning, technical and engineering fields, science, math, business, and nursing. However, there are also few studies where Kahoot! did not have a significant positive effect on learning performance. *Research question two* focused on how Kahoot! affects classroom dynamics. [25] The literature review included four studies that reported statistically significant results related to classroom dynamics, where one showed that the effect on classroom dynamics was reduced from first-time use to after frequent use over five months.[26] However, the thirty-three other papers all reported on improved classroom dynamics from using Kahoot! in the classroom, including the improved teacher-student interaction and student-student interaction, more favorable to actively participate in class, improved classroom atmosphere, and easier to answer questions in class.[27]

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