

Gamifying Education: Exploring Student Perceptions of *Kahoot!* As a Learning Medium

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Abstract

This study investigates students' perceptions of Kahoot! as a learning medium for English at Sekolah Tinggi Bahasa Asing Technocrat. Employing a qualitative approach, the research gathers data through questionnaires, interviews, and observations. The sample includes 37 students from various academic years who have utilized Kahoot! in both online and offline English classes. The findings indicate a generally positive perception of Kahoot!. Based on the questionnaire results, 47.78% of students demonstrated high motivation to learn English using Kahoot!, attributing this to its competitive features and engaging atmosphere. Students expressed a preference for Kahoot! exercises over traditional textbooks, highlighting the scoring system as particularly motivating. Regarding material comprehension and skill development, 47.98% agreed that Kahoot! enhances their understanding of English materials and improves their language skills. Additionally, students reported that Kahoot! supports material review, fosters supplementary learning, and strengthens vocabulary retention. In terms of the learning process, 64% of respondents agreed that Kahoot! facilitates effective learning by encouraging group collaboration, increasing classroom interaction, and improving material retention compared to conventional teaching methods. Overall, the study concludes that Kahoot! is an effective and engaging tool for teaching and learning English at the tertiary level.

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INTRODUCTION

The continuous advancement of science and technology each year significantly influences progress in the education sector, encompassing methods, media, and learning models. The emergence of Artificial Intelligence enables personalized learning experiences, enhanced student engagement, and real-time feedback (Islam et al, 2024), making an engaging and attractive classroom learning atmosphere even more challenging. However, research revealed that teachers thought that they were not competent enough to adapt the sophisticated technology in the classroom instructions (Rejeki, 2021). To leverage these developments, educators must equip themselves with diverse and updated skills to deliver high-quality instruction (Ramli et al., 2018) because technology integration and

teacher competency have a substantial influence on the student's development of 21st-century learning (Nurhidayat et al, 2024). Teachers can acquire these skills by actively engaging in various training programs, workshops, and seminars. Enhancing these competencies is crucial for teachers to fulfill their responsibilities and improve the quality of education.

Educators can integrate these technological advancements into the learning process through various developed technologies. One such method is game-based learning, which serves as a tool to assist students in problem-solving, enhance critical thinking skills, and facilitate assessments during the learning process (Bakhsh et al, 2022; Qian & Clark, 2016). Additionally, this approach allows students to receive feedback and stimulates both their verbal and visual skills (Zeglen & Rosendale, 2018) that will in turn increase student's cognitive load resulted from interaction with sources that combine texts, visuals, and audio (Clark & Mayer, 2011).

With the increasing number of gamification existing as a learning media, it is important to identify suitable games for the students to help maintain a positive interest in learning. Students at the tertiary level, for instance, often struggle with high levels of stress and anxiety (Dias et al, 2024) because they are faced with the pressure of university life, which demands enrichment and imposes greater responsibilities for future life, leading to stressful situations. However, all learners have the right to get proper learning processes to succeed in their learning. In this context, technological advancement has become one of the solutions for the students' needs.

Despite the numerous potential benefits of technological advancements in education, the effectiveness of their implementation in real-world classroom settings remains a topic of debate. For example, a study by Pajarito et al. (2024) suggested that traditional teaching methods are more effective for subject mastery development. Therefore, investigating students' perceptions offers valuable insights into how they interact with and respond to technology. This feedback can highlight both the strengths and weaknesses of using technology, enabling educators to adjust their teaching strategies to better meet students' needs. If students find digital gamification engaging and motivating, teachers can integrate it more frequently into their lessons. Conversely, if students encounter challenges, such as technical issues or insufficient content depth, educators can address these concerns to enhance the overall learning experience (Pan et al., 2021).

Kahoot!, a widely used gamification tool in classroom instruction, has been extensively studied to assess its impact on various aspects of language learning, including vocabulary acquisition, grammar comprehension, and communication skills. Research indicates that students perceive *Kahoot!* as an engaging platform that improves their learning experience. For instance, a study by Darwis and Amal (2023) found that students' perceptions of using *Kahoot!* in vocabulary learning were positive, underscoring its effectiveness in language education. Similarly, a qualitative meta-analysis by Yürük (2023) highlighted the potential of *Kahoot!* to enhance student engagement and learning outcomes in language instruction. Moreover, insights from such research can inform the development of new features and functionalities within *Kahoot!* platform, ensuring it aligns more closely with educational needs and goals (Rosdy & Yunus, 2021). These findings are essential for guiding curriculum design and instructional methods, ensuring *Kahoot!* is used effectively to support language development. By examining students' experiences, educators and researchers can assess whether *Kahoot!* truly enhances learning outcomes and engagement in English language education.

Additionally, exploring students' perceptions helps assess the broader implications of game-based learning. It enables educators to understand how elements of gamification—such as competition, rewards, and instant feedback—affect students' motivation, engagement, and learning

behavior. This knowledge can contribute to the broader field of educational technology, offering evidence-based practices for integrating gamification into various subjects beyond English (Dicheva et al, 2015). Ultimately, this research emphasizes the importance of student-centered learning. By prioritizing students' voices and experiences, educators can create a more inclusive and responsive educational environment, enhancing teaching effectiveness and empowering students to become active participants in their learning journey.

In conclusion, investigating students' perceptions of *Kahoot!* as a tool for learning English is crucial for evaluating its effectiveness, informing instructional practices, and contributing to the broader understanding of game-based learning. This research aims to enhance educational outcomes and foster a more engaging and supportive learning environment for students. Therefore, the study will examine students' perceptions of *Kahoot!* as a medium for learning English.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research adopts a descriptive qualitative method to analyze students' perceptions of *Kahoot!* as a learning evaluation tool (Hodgkinson-Williams & Mostert, 2005). The study focuses on students' motivation, comprehension, skills improvement, and the overall effectiveness of the learning process. The participants are 37 English Literature students from all academic years at Sekolah Tinggi Bahasa Asing Technocrat, with 10 selected for interviews and observations conducted in four classes. Data collection involves a questionnaire with 10 items rated on a 5-point Likert scale, covering motivation, effectiveness, and comprehension based on Sardiman's learning motivation theory and John Carroll's concept of effectiveness (Lestari & Nugraheni, 2022). Classroom observations systematically assess engagement, material comprehension, and interaction levels, documented using an observation sheet. Additionally, interviews are conducted in both classroom and informal settings to encourage open discussions, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of students' perceptions of *Kahoot!* (Alawadhi & Abu-Ayyash, 2021). Below is the interview protocol to help answer the research problems.

Aspect	No	Question
Students' motivation	1.	How do you feel about using <i>Kahoot!</i> in your English classes?
	2.	Does the use of <i>Kahoot!</i> increase your interest in learning English? If so, how?
	3.	What aspects of <i>Kahoot!</i> do you find most motivating?
	4.	How does <i>Kahoot!</i> compare to other learning tools or methods in terms of keeping you engaged?
Students' English improvement	5.	Can you describe any specific ways in which <i>Kahoot!</i> has helped improve your English skills?
	6.	How <i>Kahoot!</i> becomes a good tool for you to learn English?
	7.	How <i>Kahoot!</i> could help you to get better comprehension in learning English?
Learning Effectiveness	8.	How effective do you find <i>Kahoot!</i> as a learning tool for English compared to traditional teaching methods
	9.	Do you have something that you do not like about <i>Kahoot!</i> as a medium to learn English? Please describe!
	10.	Can you describe a specific instance where <i>Kahoot!</i> helped you understand a concept better than traditional methods?

Table 1. Interview Questions

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of this research indicate a positive student perception of *Kahoot!* as a medium for learning English, categorized into three key aspects: motivation, comprehension and skills

improvement, and the effectiveness of the learning process. The findings reveal a generally favorable view of *Kahoot!*. Based on the questionnaire, 47.78% of students reported high motivation when learning English through *Kahoot!*, highlighting its competitive nature and engaging environment. Many students preferred *Kahoot!* activities over traditional textbooks, particularly appreciating the scoring system as a source of motivation. Regarding material comprehension and skill enhancement, 47.98% agreed that *Kahoot!* facilitated a better understanding of English materials and contributed to language skill development by aiding content review, encouraging additional learning, and enhancing vocabulary recall. In terms of learning effectiveness, 64% of students acknowledged that *Kahoot!* fostered group collaboration, increased classroom interaction, and improved material retention compared to conventional teaching methods. These findings are further supported by observations and interview sessions, which demonstrated students' positive responses to the use of *Kahoot!* as a learning tool in the classroom.

A. The Students' Motivation

The students' motivation increased when *Kahoot!* was used as a medium for learning English in class. According to the questionnaire results, 40.5% of students strongly agreed that *Kahoot!* motivated them to learn more in class, while 56.8% agreed, and only 2.7% remained neutral. Students reported that *Kahoot!* made learning more enjoyable compared to traditional lectures, which they found monotonous. The interactive nature of *Kahoot!* encouraged active participation and engagement, making the learning process more dynamic. This sentiment is further supported by students' interview responses, highlighting their preference for *Kahoot!* over conventional teaching methods, which can be seen below.

"Kahoot! itu seru, Miss. Kita belajar terlalu banyak presentasi dan dengerin jadi bosan dan ga masuk". ("Kahoot! is fun, Miss. Too much presentation and lectures make us bored and hamper our understanding.") (YS)

"Saya suka baca buku. Tapi saya ga nangkap langsung materinya. Kalau di Kahoot! itu kayak dipaksa mikir sih, Miss, jadi memotivasi buat belajar beneran. Yang Miss jelasin oh ini. Kalau ga bener kan nanti kalah." ("I like reading books. But I didn't catch the material right away. Kahoot! forced us to think about what we are missing, so it motivates us to actually study. What the lecturer has been explaining is this. If it's not right, you'll lose.") (KRJ)

The students displayed high enthusiasm during class activities using *Kahoot!*, as evidenced by their energetic reactions such as clapping, cheering, and excitedly responding to quiz results. They also expressed a preference for practicing with *Kahoot!* over traditional book exercises. According to the questionnaire, 56.8% of students strongly agreed that using *Kahoot!* was more enjoyable than completing exercises in a textbook, while 35.1% agreed, and only 8.1% remained neutral. This preference was attributed to *Kahoot!*'s engaging visual design, the ability to collaborate with peers in real time, and the convenience of using their phones for participation. The sample responses below illustrate the idea.

"Kahoot! itu lebih seru sih, Miss, karena kan dia di layar warna-warni terus kayak main kuis siapa paling cepat begitu. Jadinya ngerjain tugasnya kayak lagi main saja ga lagi belajar. Saya paling suka main team mode soalnya bisa diskusi bareng." ("Kahoot! is more exciting, Miss, because it's on a colorful screen and it's like playing a quiz on who's the fastest. So

doing assignments is like you're just playing, no longer studying. I really like playing team mode because here we can discuss together.") (UH)

"Ngerjain Kahoot! itu lebih fun saja sih, Miss. Soalnya kan kalau di kertas itu tulis cape saja bosan hitam putih. Sudah biasa. Monoton. Kahoot! itu seru banyak tantangannya saja. Banyak interaksinya." ("Doing Kahoot! is just more fun, Miss. The problem is, if you write on paper, you're tired, you're bored, in black and white. It is common. Monotonous. Kahoot! is fun and has lots of challenges. There's a lot of interaction.") (DA)

When the lecturer gave the exercises on *Kahoot!*, the students looked happier and more excited. It took them only around 10 to 15 minutes to finish the activity and they grasped the materials already. Meanwhile, it took more than 20-30 minutes in each class to finish their exercise on a textbook.

The motivation was also increased because of the scoring system on the *Kahoot!* application that showed who was the highest team, the top five teams were on the screen. It triggered the students to pay more attention to the activity and put their focus full on it. The questionnaire showed that 40,5% of students strongly agreed that *Kahoot!* improved the students' motivation to find a correct answer since it showed the scoring system on screen. Meanwhile, 51,4% of students agreed with this statement, and only 8,1% of students still not decided. Here are some responses from the students.

"Miss, saya semangat kalau pakai Kahoot! karena tim saya selalu ada di TOP 3. Kita harus menang terus aja pokoknya." ("Miss, I'm excited to use *Kahoot!* because my team is always in the TOP 3. We just must keep winning.") (AF)

"Asik banget, Miss, ini. Kita besok begini lagi dong. Supaya saya semakin termotivasi belajar MK nya, Miss. Saya yakin menang terus setiap minggu kalau begini. Saya mau jadi nomor 1 terus kalau ujiannya juga pake Kahoot! Miss." ("This is so fun. We'll be like this again tomorrow. So that I will be more motivated to study the subject that you teach, Miss. I'm sure I'll keep winning every week like this. I want to be number 1 if the exam also uses *Kahoot!*, Miss.") (ARQ)

The students looked so excited every time they saw their group name or their own names on the rank list. However, the students who were not on the top five lists looked so furious during the game. Sometimes they shouted or blamed the internet connection. Although it happened, there was still the positive side that those who had not been in the top five ranks kept trying their best to boost and pass their friends' ranks.

Based on the explanation above it can be concluded that *Kahoot!* Motivates students to learn more because it is more fun, there is a scoring system, and it motivates them to be more competitive in learning, an idea in line with Licorish et al., (2018). The use of *Kahoot!* as a learning medium in English classes has been shown to significantly boost student motivation and engagement. The interactive, competitive nature of the platform, along with its visual appeal and collaborative features, made learning more enjoyable compared to traditional methods. The scoring system further encouraged students to focus on improving their performance, while interviews confirmed the positive impact of *Kahoot!* on student enthusiasm and comprehension. Overall, *Kahoot!* proved to be an effective and engaging tool for enhancing both student participation and learning outcomes in English education.

B. Students' English Comprehension and Skills Improvement

Students claimed that their comprehension and English skills have improved better after regularly using *Kahoot!* as a medium to learn English in class. 37,8% of students strongly agreed that *Kahoot!* helped them review the materials that the lecturer had taught them in class. 51,4% of students agreed that it helped them to review the class lessons, and only 8,1% have not decided on anything. Some students stated:

"Kahoot! itu sebetulnya kayak ujian pilihan ganda, Miss. Jadi manfaat Kahoot! kita jadi tahu apa jawaban yang benar dan jawaban kita salah atau engga. Jadi lebih mudah ngereview aja dibanding kalau ngerjain buku kan harus nunggu guru ngoreksi atau kit acari tau di google apa temen yang lebih pinter buat tau bener salah atau bahkan malah nunggu dosen ngoreksi dulu." ("Kahoot! is actually like a multiple-choice exam. So, the benefit of Kahoot! is that we know what the right answer is and whether our answer is wrong or not. So, it's easier to just review than if you're working on a book, you have to wait for the teacher to correct it or find out on Google whether a friend is smarter to know right or wrong or even wait for the lecturer to correct it first.") (THS)

"Iya manfaatnya tuh Kahoot! bagus buat ngereview lagi yang baru dipelajarin. Jadi lebih paham. Ketimbang abis belajar ada kuis atau ngerjain soal bawaannya stress. Jadi Kahoot! tu mereview materi dengan lebih menyenangkan aja." ("Yes, Kahoot! is good for reviewing what you've just learned. So, you understand better. Instead of having a quiz or doing a quiz after studying, it's inherently stressful. So Kahoot! makes reviewing material more enjoyable.") (WS)

The researcher compares the results of the answers during the *Kahoot!* sessions for reviewing the material and when the students doing the exercises on the book for review. More errors happened when they did the practice in the book. On *Kahoot!*, they tried their best to make their answers correct.

The students also told the researcher, after playing *Kahoot!* on campus. They frequently played *Kahoot!* at home to learn more English. In *Kahoot!*, they could find a lot of free games about English. This proved that *Kahoot!* generates curiosity, initiative, and independence in learning, as acknowledged by RF below.

"Miss, kemarin aku main past tense di Kahoot! Google Play. Seru banget aku bisa main dimana mana sama adiku. Ini bagus banget untuk ningkatin Bahasa Inggris aku selain di kampus, Miss." ("Miss, yesterday I played *past tense* on Kahoot! Google Play. It was so much fun, I could play anywhere with my little brother. This is a really good opportunity for improving my English out of campus/classroom settings, Miss.") (RF)

In extending the learning more English at *Kahoot!* game in class. It was explained that the students also got more information from the false answers that they had chosen. For example, when the questions were about office management, please mention all organizations in a company. The lecturer could explain why red was correct and why others were not. So, it gave more visualization to students and additional new vocabulary to them. In addition, in the vocabulary classroom, when the question was about classroom objects, the lecturers could explain why other answers were not quite right compared to the correct ones. Thus, it gave them some new knowledge of English, as expressed by one of the students below.

"Iya saya belajar banget tuh, Miss, vocab baru pas apa bedanya department, division, directors, itu di Kahoot!. Kayak dapet aja new vocab nya. Terus kan Miss jelasin juga bedanya apa waktu di awal tapi lebih engeh pas abis bikin salah jawab di Kahoot!. Oh ini

artinya tuh ini. Gitu." ("Yes, I learned much, Miss, new vocab, what is the difference between department, division, directors, on *Kahoot!*. It's like I just got new vocab. Then Miss also explained the difference between what the time at the beginning was, but it was easier to understand after making the wrong answer on *Kahoot!*. Oh, this is what this means. That's it.") (ARD)

Although the lecturer initially explained these terms, the student found that the interactive nature of *Kahoot!* and the immediate feedback after answering questions incorrectly provided a clearer and more memorable understanding. This suggests that the gamified learning environment offered by *Kahoot!* can effectively reinforce traditional teaching methods, making the learning process more engaging and impactful.

To support the students' English improvement, *Kahoot!* also engages the students to think faster and have rapid vocabulary recall. In the vocabulary classroom and English Science Technology, it seemed quite hard for the lecturer to explain the vocabulary when using the conventional way. However, when the students tried using *Kahoot!* The students could recall their previous knowledge better. It encouraged the students to think faster because there was a timer to answer quickly before it ended. AH explained

"Iya Miss kalau review vocabularynya pakai Kahoot! tiba-tiba inget soalnya kan ada timer ya jadi harus cepet mikir kalau ga ya kalah." (Yes, Miss, if you review vocabulary using *Kahoot!* I suddenly remembered all of them because there was a timer, so I had to think quickly or else I would lose.) (AH)

In conclusion, *Kahoot!* has proven to be an effective tool for improving students' English skills by fostering interactive and gamified learning. The platform enhances students' vocabulary recall, facilitates better material review, and boosts motivation to engage with the language. Many students reported that *Kahoot!* made reviewing materials more enjoyable and efficient compared to traditional methods, providing immediate feedback that helped them identify correct and incorrect answers while deepening their understanding. The competitive nature of the game encouraged faster thinking, while the ability to play outside the classroom further promoted independent learning. Overall, *Kahoot!* not only makes learning more engaging but also supports language acquisition by reinforcing key concepts and vocabulary in a fun and memorable way. This aligns with findings by Nuri et al. (2022), which highlight *Kahoot!*'s role in enhancing students' language acquisition through its enjoyable and effective learning environment.

C. Effectiveness of the Learning Process

Students claimed that *Kahoot!* becomes more effective media to teach and learn English. 19.8% of students strongly agreed that *Kahoot!* is an effective medium to help them learn English, 64% of students agreed that *Kahoot!* had become an effective tool for them to learn English, and only 11.7% of students had not decided about their response.

Using *Kahoot!* creates a more collaborative learning environment by fostering active participation and teamwork among students. The platform encourages group activities and friendly competition, where students can work together to answer questions and discuss the correct answers. This collaborative aspect not only makes learning more enjoyable but also enhances peer-to-peer learning, as students share knowledge and strategies with one another.

ARD explained "As a student, I find using *Kahoot!* in our English classes incredibly beneficial for creating a collaborative learning environment. Whenever we play *Kahoot!* It feels like we are working together as a team. Even though it's a competition, we often discuss the questions and help each other out, especially when someone is unsure about an answer. It makes learning more fun and less stressful because we're all in it together."

In addition, *Kahoot!* also enables a more active learning environment. *Kahoot!* enables a more active learning environment by transforming passive learning into an engaging and interactive experience. Traditional classroom settings often rely on lectures and passive notetaking, which can lead to disengagement and limited student participation. In contrast, *Kahoot!* requires students to actively engage with the material through quizzes and games, promoting a higher level of involvement and attention. A student responded

"Sebagai seorang siswa, saya sangat mengapresiasi bagaimana Kahoot! menjadikan kelas kami lebih aktif dan menarik. Daripada hanya duduk dan mendengarkan dosen." (As a student, I really appreciate how *Kahoot!* makes our classes more active and engaging. instead of just sitting and listening to the lecturer talks.) (KRJ)

Lastly, learning English with *Kahoot!* fosters permanent skill improvement better than traditional memorization. This is due to its active learning approach, engaging gamified elements, and immediate feedback. Instead of passively absorbing information, students actively participate in quizzes, enhancing their understanding and retention. The fun, competitive nature of *Kahoot!* keeps students motivated and engaged, promoting continuous practice and long-term retention. Immediate feedback helps correct mistakes in real-time, reinforcing knowledge effectively. In contrast, traditional methods often rely on rote memorization, which leads to short-term retention and less enduring learning outcomes.

UH explained "As a student, I find learning English with *Kahoot!* much more effective than traditional methods. It's engaging and fun, which helps me remember vocabulary and concepts better. The immediate feedback helps me correct mistakes right away, and the regular practice keeps me motivated. Overall, *Kahoot!* makes my learning experience more dynamic and lasting."

In conclusion, *Kahoot!* has proven to be an effective tool for teaching and learning English. *Kahoot!* fosters a collaborative learning environment by promoting active participation and teamwork. Students enjoy working together, which enhances peer learning and makes the process more enjoyable. The platform also creates a more active learning environment compared to traditional methods. It engages students through interactive quizzes, making classes more dynamic. Furthermore, *Kahoot!* supports long-term skill improvement. Its active learning approach, immediate feedback, and gamified elements help students retain information better than traditional memorization (Adhitama et al., 2022).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

In conclusion, the study on students' perceptions of *Kahoot!* as a medium for learning English at Sekolah Tinggi Bahasa Asing Technocrat reveals overwhelmingly positive feedback. Using qualitative methods, the research found that 47.78% of students showed high motivation to learn English through *Kahoot!*, appreciating its competitive and enjoyable nature over traditional textbooks. The scoring system significantly motivated students, making the learning process more engaging.

Furthermore, 47.98% of students reported that *Kahoot!* improved their comprehension of English materials and enhanced their language skills. They highlighted that *Kahoot!* aids in reviewing materials promotes additional learning, and boosts vocabulary recall. The platform also facilitated effective learning for 64% of students, encouraging group collaboration, increasing classroom interaction, and improving material retention compared to traditional methods. These findings suggest that *Kahoot!* is not only an engaging digital tool but also an effective instructional strategy for enhancing student motivation and comprehension in English learning. Given its benefits, educators are encouraged to integrate *Kahoot!* more widely in language classrooms to create a more dynamic and interactive learning environment that supports student engagement and academic success. Future research could explore the long-term effects of *Kahoot!* on language proficiency and its impact on different student demographics or learning styles to further optimize its implementation.

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