

Research Article

Applying Kahoot! in Teaching Vocabulary to High School Students: a Case Study in Duc Trong Province

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Abstract

This research explores the application of Kahoot!, a game-based learning platform, in enhancing vocabulary acquisition for high school students in Duc Trong Province, Vietnam. The study investigates how this digital tool impacts student motivation, engagement, and overall vocabulary retention. Seventy 10th-grade students participated in the study, and data were collected through interviews and surveys to assess their experiences with the platform. The findings indicate that although participation was initially inconsistent, the majority of students reported increased interest in vocabulary learning when using Kahoot!. The platform was particularly effective in fostering student interaction, focus, and healthy competition, which contributed to improved learning outcomes. The study highlights that the integration of digital games into classroom teaching can positively influence student engagement and motivation, especially when teaching vocabulary. Kahoot! allows for real-time feedback, interactive quizzes, and the use of multimedia elements, all of which contribute to a more dynamic and enjoyable learning experience. Furthermore, the study emphasizes that the platform promotes a lively and inclusive classroom environment, where students feel more comfortable participating in discussions and vocabulary activities. The research concludes by recommending the adoption of digital tools like Kahoot! to enhance student-centered learning, particularly in language instruction. The positive correlation between Kahoot! and vocabulary retention suggests that game-based learning can be an effective teaching method in fostering active participation and improving educational outcomes. This study provides insights into how digital games can transform traditional learning approaches, making them more engaging and effective for students in the context of language education.

Keywords

English Vocabulary, Kahoot!, Technology Integration

1. Introduction

Currently, most students in the class lack the motivation to participate in vocabulary learning activities. Some students

who are not interested in learning a foreign language remain silent, while others engage in personal activities, such as using their phones or having private conversations (Dörnyei, 2001; Ushioda, 2013). This lack of motivation poses a challenge for educators who aim to create a lively and comfortable

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classroom environment where all students can actively participate with enthusiasm and effectiveness (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Therefore, there is a need for a specialized teaching method for vocabulary lessons that engages students in meaningful learning (Nation, 2013; Ellis, 2015).

One recommended approach is game-based learning, which has been increasingly integrated into education to foster engagement and active participation (Prensky, 2001; Gee, 2003). The game used in this context is primarily in the form of multiple-choice questions, which can be enhanced with the integration of images and videos to captivate learners (Wu, 2018). Research shows that incorporating digital tools, such as Kahoot, into language classrooms can increase motivation and participation (Zainuddin & Halili, 2016). Kahoot is a free educational tool used for designing quizzes, puzzles, and online surveys, and it serves as an interactive classroom system (Licorish et al., 2018). Since Kahoot is accessible on all devices—laptops, smartphones, and computers with an internet connection—it offers flexibility in its application (Wang & Tahir, 2020).

2. Conceptual Frameworks

The concept of intrinsic motivation proposed by Malone (1981) serves as the study's theoretical foundation. As stated by Malone, the three main components of intrinsic motivation are difficulty, imagination, and curiosity, all of which are essential for making learning enjoyable. Malone highlighted the importance of establishing a challenging learning environment, as difficulty is a key element in fostering intrinsic motivation (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). Fantasy also plays a critical role, as it drives students' engagement by allowing them to use their creativity (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Curiosity, another vital component, is believed to represent a student's desire to learn and explore (Loewenstein, 1994). Furthermore, sound effects, music, and visuals are powerful tools for sustaining learners' attention and engagement in digital platforms (Mayer, 2009).

2.1. Enhancing Vocabulary Acquisition Through Digital Gaming

As per the findings of Kirriemuir and McFarlane (2004), game-based learning involves "engagements wherein games serve as the central component, either as the primary activity or as a catalyst for other associated activities, with learning as a desired or unintended consequence" (p. 7). Serrano (2019) conducted a comprehensive review of the impact of digital games on student learning outcomes and found that game-based learning not only increases motivation but also improves academic performance (Hamari et al., 2016). Additionally, studies reveal that digital games, which promote both competition and collaboration, have a significant effect on students' achievements (Vygotsky, 1978; Gee, 2007).

Games are often viewed as a method of classroom

management, encouraging active engagement. Li (2021) asserts that language games, as opposed to traditional textbooks, significantly increase students' willingness to study as they require active participation. The competitive element in many games amplifies learners' desire to excel, further motivating them to engage in the activity (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011). The appeal of games lies in their ability to immerse students in the learning process, making them an effective tool for vocabulary acquisition (Nation, 2013; Schmitt, 2000). Therefore, games can be used as an innovative and successful teaching method in English language classrooms, particularly at the University of Industry.

2.2. Gamification and Motivation in Language Learning

Gamification, defined as the use of game elements in non-game contexts, has emerged as a powerful tool for increasing student engagement and motivation in educational settings (Deterding et al., 2011). In language learning, gamification has shown significant potential to improve learners' motivation, attention, and participation (Reinhardt & Sykes, 2012). Games can transform vocabulary learning, traditionally considered a monotonous activity, into an enjoyable and competitive task that fosters intrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Through immediate feedback, scoring, and levels, gamification addresses both intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors (Kapp, 2012).

Research conducted by Su and Cheng (2015) demonstrates that students who engage with gamified platforms exhibit higher levels of engagement and retention in vocabulary lessons. Furthermore, by using gamified approaches such as Kahoot!, learners can experience real-time feedback, competition, and collaboration, which can enhance their learning outcomes (Wang & Tahir, 2020). The incorporation of game mechanics, such as leaderboards and rewards, motivates students to actively participate and improve their language skills, particularly vocabulary retention (Huang & Hew, 2018).

Gamified tools like Kahoot! not only increase motivation but also promote a positive classroom atmosphere where students feel more comfortable participating in language activities (Sánchez-Mena & Martí-Parreño, 2017). Consequently, gamification represents an essential method for overcoming student reluctance and improving overall language acquisition outcomes.

3. Tool Selection

The interactive and engaging aspects of Kahoot! resulted in its selection as the main research instrument. With a gamified

approach to vocabulary training that takes into account high school students' preferences for interactive learning experiences, it is consistent with the research's goals.

3.1. Overview of Kahoot

3.1.1. What is Kahoot?

It is used as an interactive classroom system and is a free educational tool based on a gaming platform called Kahoot.

Since Kahoot is just a website, it can be accessed from any computer, laptop, tablet, smartphone, or other internet-connected device.

With Kahoot, users can simply and rapidly add photos and videos while also designing games (quiz questions) with a variety of possibilities.

At the website <https://kahoot.com>, teachers can create a Kahoot account.

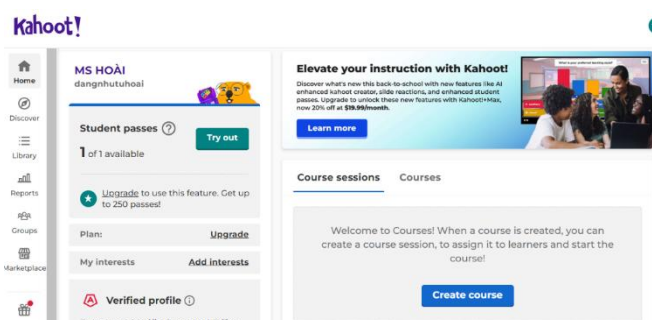


Figure 1. Kahoot interface

3.2. Application of Kahoot in Real Teaching Situations

3.2.1. Instances of Using Kahoot During Lessons

Beginning of the Lesson

Purpose: To engage students, review previously learned material from the previous lesson, and assess students' understanding before introducing new content. The teacher uses it to gather whole-class feedback on the foundational knowledge before starting a new topic. For example, to assess the ability to recognize words related to the theme "organizations in Vietnam" and determine how many vocabulary words students already know in relation to this topic.

End of the Lesson or Activity

Purpose: To reinforce newly acquired knowledge. For example, the teacher reinforces knowledge about the UNICEF theme.

Using for Vocabulary Instruction

Kahoot provides various game modes such as "Classic" or "Team Mode." Teachers can choose the mode that aligns with their vocabulary teaching goals. The Classic mode is suitable

for individual competition in vocabulary learning, while Team Mode encourages collaboration among groups. For example, in the theme "VIETNAM AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS," the teacher can require students to play the game through the Kahoot link to provide more information about UNICEF's ECD project and UNDP's Community-Based Rural Development. This allows students to learn more about the benefit options these organizations offer in their local area.



Figure 2. The interface after students participate

4. Lesson Blueprint

The goal of the lesson for Speaking, Lesson 4 of Unit 7, is to include students in an active and engaging learning process. To ensure that students thoroughly comprehend the subject, the class framework is carefully developed. It starts with a context-setting exercise that uses a pertinent movie to pique students' attention. The activities that follow, such as a Kahoot game, finishing dialogues, and group discussions, promote critical thinking and active engagement. Students also get the chance to share their ideas, which helps them improve their collaboration and communication abilities. The session is concluded with a summary of the most important ideas and a homework assignment, highlighting the value of effective self-study techniques. This lesson blueprint seeks to accomplish the specified objectives with a defined timeframe and the available resources.

The use of the Kahoot game (Activity 2) is one of the best features of this lesson blueprint. This useful digital tool teaches students about the Early Childhood Development (ECD) project of UNICEF and the Community-Based Rural Development project of UNDP while also adding a fun and competitive aspect to the lesson. Students may take part in the game alone, test their knowledge, and get fast feedback on how they did. Kahoot improves understanding and retention while also making learning fun. This use of technology in the course encourages engaging and productive learning.

The activities in this lesson blueprint go beyond conventional teaching strategies to encourage students to collaborate

and think critically. In activity 5, students have talks in groups to choose which project or program would be most beneficial to their community. The goal of this assignment is to have students thinking critically and working together to reach choices. Activity 6 also asks students to come up with ideas for enhancing project quality and promoting community development in Vietnam. Students are prepared for active engagement in real-world events through these group-based exercises, which foster important skills like communication, cooperation, and problem-solving. Overall, this lesson blueprint uses technology, interactive exercises, and group projects to provide students a well-rounded educational experience.

5. Implementation Strategy

The use of technology is critical to improve the learning process in this interesting and interactive session. The classroom is set up to encourage active participation from all students and to make it simple to incorporate a Kahoot game into the lecture. Warm welcomes are extended to the kids as they enter the classroom, fostering a friendly and productive learning atmosphere. The layout of the classroom makes it possible for pupils to see the Kahoot game well on the TV or projector. With a functional laptop and a projector/TV set up and ready to go, the instructor makes sure that all technological demands are addressed. A dynamic and engaging program called Kahoot will be used on the internet-connected computer to help reinforce the lesson's material.

The instructor takes on a key role in leading pupils through the Kahoot game throughout the class. Along with serving as a facilitator, the instructor must also keep an eye on how well the children are participating in the game and how far along they are. Students start the Kahoot game on their own, and the teacher monitors their performance, marking any areas that could need more explanation or discussion. This engaging game-based interaction encourages active involvement and keeps students interested in the course. After the game is finished, the instructor offers helpful criticism while highlighting important lessons learned and reiterating the lesson's goals. A vibrant learning environment is created as a result of this interaction between the teacher, the students, and the Kahoot game, which seamlessly combines technology and pedagogy.

The interactive learning that takes place in the classroom is stimulated by the Kahoot game. As a result, the lesson is more engaging for the pupils and more likely to stick in their memories. Students get the chance to use their knowledge and put what they've learned to the test through the game. The game not only evaluates students' comprehension but also fosters friendly rivalry among them, igniting their excitement and driving them to succeed. Students learn new information while also honing their critical thinking abilities as they follow the teacher through the Kahoot game, thus enhancing their

educational experience. The Kahoot game is an essential tool for increasing the teaching and learning process since it combines technology, active involvement, and learning objectives.

6. Assessment and Feedback

We use a variety of approaches to assess students' learning progress in this session. The evaluation includes both formative and summative components, enabling ongoing input and a final assessment of their understanding.

Formative Assessment: We use formative evaluations to monitor student knowledge at various points throughout the class. During the Kahoot game, we watch students' replies to spot areas of strength and difficulty and provide real-time feedback. Through constant evaluation, we may successfully modify our teaching methods to meet the requirements of each individual student.

Summative Evaluation: Tasks and activities that serve as summative evaluations are included in the lesson. These tests measure how well students can use their language and academic knowledge. Their performance is evaluated in part by the caliber of their replies and involvement in these activities.

Data Analysis:

Under- standing of the Lesson	Be- fore Kahoot (10A)	After Kahoot (10A)	Before Kahoot (10B)	After Kahoot (10B)
Fully Under- stood	6 stu- dents (15%)	25 stu- dents (62.5%)	9 stu- dents (22.5%)	15 stu- dents (37.5%)
Partially Under- stood	34 students (85%)	15 stu- dents (37.5%)	31 stu- dents (77.5%)	25 stu- dents (62.5%)
Total Students	40 students	40 stu- dents	40 stu- dents	40 stu- dents

"Fully Understood" represents the number of students who demonstrated a comprehensive understanding of the lesson.

"Partially Understood" represents the number of students who had some understanding but needed further clarification.

"Total Students" represents the total number of students in each class.

This table clearly illustrates the improvement in student understanding after implementing Kahoot in both classes. In 10A, the percentage of students who fully understood the lesson increased from 15% before Kahoot to 62.5% after Kahoot. Similarly, in 10B, the percentage increased from 22.5% to 37.5%. These improvements highlight the positive impact of using Kahoot in enhancing student comprehension.

7. Reflection and Refinement

The Kahoot activity in this lesson brought notable successes,

such as high student engagement and immediate feedback. However, there is room for improvement. Future iterations should include a variety of question types and adaptive difficulty levels. Integrating discussions and collecting feedback from students is crucial. Additionally, a technical contingency plan should be in place to address potential disruptions due to machinery malfunctions or network issues.

8. Conclusion

In conclusion, participants had a favorable impression of Kahoot, finding it to be a highly effective activity for teaching English vocabulary in the classroom. It greatly improved classroom dynamics and encouraged more student participation. Students were inspired by Kahoot's features, such as rewards and leaderboards, to actively participate in class activities and express themselves more freely. Unexpectedly, the anonymity aspect also helped increase pupils' enthusiasm to learn.

While Kahoot's effects are obvious in improving student engagement and interaction, its precise impact on English vocabulary learning, particularly in the context of the "Vietnam and International Organizations - Lesson 4: Speaking," remains open to further investigation. It is unclear if the increase in vocabulary

Using an online tool in a 45-minute lesson is suitable for stimulating students' learning. Overusing too many online tools in a single lesson can distract students' attention, prevent them from focusing on essential tasks, and reduce the effectiveness of the teaching.

APPENDICES

<https://create.kahoot.it/details/242a5469-5cdd-4a58-a860-42e143a96ec7>

This is a real lesson where I applied information technology, specifically the Kahoot tool, to teach vocabulary in a speaking class on February 15, 2023, and I achieved the title of Excellent Teacher of the school year 2023.

Period: 66

Date of teaching: 15/2/2023

UNIT 7: VIET NAM AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS Lesson 4: Speaking

I. OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit, students will be able to :

- Understand how to express opinions;
- Discuss and express opinions about a project or a programme that can benefit their local area.
- Understand more about programmes for communities;
- Develop self-study skills.

II. LANGUAGE KNOWLEDGE

- Know some expressions of opinion:

I think / believe that the project / programme ... is more important / necessary for my local area because ...

This project / programme helps local people ... / brings local people more opportunities to ...

In our group, most of us agree that ... But one member thinks that ...

III. INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCES

- Teacher: Grade 10 text book, laptop, projector / TV
- Students : Text books, studying equipment....
- Computer connected to the Internet.

IV. PROCEDURE

Teacher and students' activities	Content
ACTIVITY 1 + Greeting + Asking question: * Teacher asks students to watch the following video and answer the questions: 1) Which organizations are mentioned in the video? 2) Which projects are mentioned within the organizations? ** Students work individually and provide answers *** Teacher introduces the topic of the lesson. + Lead in: Since joining international organizations, there have been many projects implemented in Vietnam aimed at community development. Two of these projects are "Vaccines for Children" and "Poverty Reduction" carried out by UNICEF and UNDP. + Introduce the lesson: In today's lesson, we will discuss these programs and provide an opinion on a project that is useful for the local area ACTIVITY 2	Questions: 1) Which organizations are mentioned in the video? 2) Which projects are mentioned within the organizations?   https://create.kahoot.it/details/242a5469-5cdd-4a58-a860-42e143a96ec7 

* Teacher requires students to play the game through the Kahoot link to provide more information about UNICEF's ECD project and UNDP's Community-Based Rural

Development, so as to learn more about the organizations' benefit options for their local area

<https://create.kahoot.it/details/242a5469-5cdd-4a58-a860-42e143a96ec7>

** Students work individually and play the game

*** Teachers give feedback

ACTIVITY 3

TASK 1: COMPLETE THE CONVERSATION ABOUT A UNICEF PROGRAMME WITH THE SENTENCES IN THE BOX. THEN PRACTISE IT IN PAIRS. (p.80)

* Teacher asks Ss what they have learnt so far about international organisations, and their programmes or projects in Viet Nam. T encourages Ss to name the programmes that they have learnt about in the Reading lesson.

- Teacher goes through the questions and answers to check understanding.

** Students work individually to match them.

*** Teacher asks one student to read the question and another the correct answer.

**** Teacher confirms the answer and has Ss practise the conversation in pairs.



TASK 1: COMPLETE THE CONVERSATION ABOUT A UNICEF PROGRAMME WITH THE SENTENCES IN THE BOX. THEN PRACTISE IT IN PAIRS. (p.80)

Key:

1. b 2. c 3. a

TASK 2: WORK IN PAIRS. STUDENT A LOOKS AT THE TABLE BELOW. STUDENT B LOOKS AT THE TABLE ON PAGE 85. ASK EACH OTHER THE QUESTIONS IN 1 TO COMPLETE YOUR TABLE. (p.80)

Imagine yourself as a member of the UNICEF's 'Vaccines for Children' project and ask your friend to learn more about the UNDP's 'Poverty Reduction' project. On the other hand, if you are a member of the UNDP's 'Poverty Reduction' project, ask your friend to learn more about the UNICEF's 'Vaccines for Children' project

Suggested answers:

Conversation 1:

Student A: What is the name of the UNDP project?

Student B: It's called Poverty Reduction.

Student A: What does it focus on?

Student B: It focuses on reducing poverty and developing economy in disadvantaged areas.

ACTIVITY 4 TASK 2: WORK IN PAIRS.

STUDENT A LOOKS AT THE TABLE BELOW.

STUDENT B LOOKS AT THE TABLE ON PAGE 85. ASK EACH OTHER THE QUESTIONS IN 1 TO COMPLETE YOUR TABLE. (p.80)

* Teacher asks Ss to look at the instructions and makes sure they understand this is an information gap activity. T demonstrates using the example exchange about the first piece of information.

- Teacher puts Ss in pairs and each student gets a role (A or B) to complete their table by asking each other questions. T gives Ss some time to prepare the questions for their partners.
- Teacher reminds Ss B to look at their tables on page 85.

** Students work in pairs to do their conversations and complete the missing information in their table without looking at their partner's table.

*** Teacher invites several pairs to role-play their conversations in front of the class, then have them read the information in their tables.

**** Teacher confirms the answer.

ACTIVITY 5 TASK 3: WORK IN

Student A: What are the activities of this project?

Student B: It provides technical support and help develop solutions to local issues.

Conversation 2:

Student B: What is the name of the UNICEF Programme?

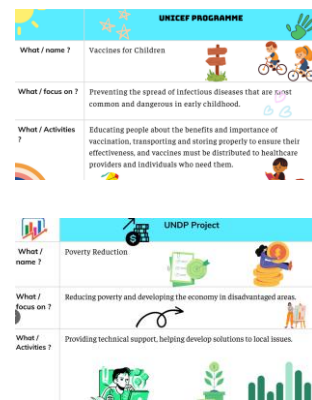
Student A: It's called Vaccines for Children.

Student B: What does it focus on?

Student A: It focuses on protecting children with life-saving vaccines.

Student B: What are the activities of this programme?

Student A: Its activities include educating people about the benefits of vaccines and vaccinating as many children as possible.



TASK 3: WORK IN GROUPS. DISCUSS AND DECIDE WHICH PROGRAMME OR PROJECT IN TASK 1 AND 2 WILL BRING MORE BENEFITS TO PEOPLE IN YOUR LOCAL AREA. THEN SHARE YOUR IDEAS WITH THE WHOLE CLASS. (p.81)

Useful expression:

GROUPS. DISCUSS AND DECIDE WHICH PROGRAMME OR PROJECT IN TASK 1 AND 2 WILL BRING MORE BENEFITS TO PEOPLE IN YOUR LOCAL AREA. THEN SHARE YOUR IDEAS WITH THE WHOLE CLASS. (p.81)

* Teacher asks Ss to read the instructions and the example discussion to make sure they understand what to do.

- Teacher introduces some useful expressions for Ss to use in their speaking.

** Teacher asks Ss to think about the programme or project in task 2, and discuss in groups to decide which one will benefit their local area more.

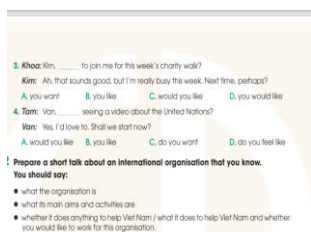
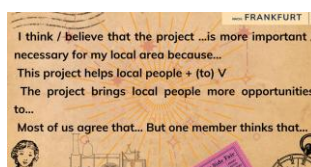
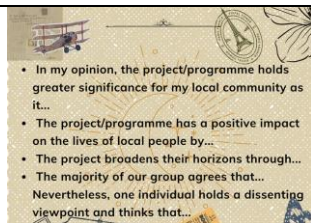
- Students have five minutes to prepare their arguments and assign roles to team members,

*** Teacher asks the class for feedback, then gives comments.

ACTIVITY 6

* Teacher asks Ss to work in group and discuss "To develop community projects in Vietnam, what will you do to improve project quality and contribute to the development of the country?"

Some suggestions: donate money, call for more contributions from government organizations, relatives, try to study well to become a member of UNICEF, raise awareness



among those around you.....

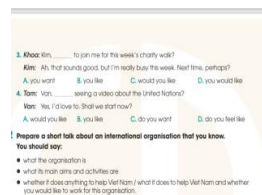
** Students have five minutes to prepare their presentation

*** Students present

**** Teacher asks the class for feedback, then gives comments.

HOMEWORK

- Exercises in the workbook



- Prepare for Listening lesson

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