



Kahoot! A Digital Tool for Learning Vocabulary in a language classroom

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ABSTRACT

Integrating technology in the classroom has increased in the last few years. Previous studies on the interactive response system (IRS) have generally been in mind of instructors of languages to facilitate teaching and learning process. The purpose of the present study was therefore to explore the use of the online platform Kahoot! As a tool for teaching and learning vocabulary in an English Class. A quasi experimental design process was developed throughout a period of time to see how helpful this tool was in the learning vocabulary process in English Language classroom. The results support previous studies which found that using IRS improved learners' engagement and interaction. They also provide further evidence that the use of Kahoot! Increased motivation and improved acquisition of vocabulary for later exams. The results of the students' satisfaction survey indicated that students enjoyed playing Kahoot! And found it easy to use. It is necessary to use classroom technology in language classrooms to improve learning, and gamification is one of the latest approaches used in language classes. Kahoot! is a platform that can be used also for informal assessment.

Keywords: Kahoot!, IRS, classroom technology, gamification, game-based learning, informal assessment.



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Kahoot! Una herramienta digital para aprender vocabulario en un aula de idiomas

RESUMEN

La integración de la tecnología en el aula ha aumentado en los últimos años. Los estudios anteriores sobre el sistema interactivo de respuesta (IRS) tienen generalmente en mente de los instructores de idiomas para facilitar el proceso de enseñanza y aprendizaje. El propósito del presente estudio fue, por lo tanto, explorar el uso de la plataforma en línea Kahoot! Como una herramienta para la enseñanza y el aprendizaje de vocabulario en una clase de Inglés. Un proceso de diseño cuasi experimental se desarrolló a lo largo de un período de tiempo para ver cuán útil fue esta herramienta en el proceso de aprendizaje del vocabulario en el aula de inglés. Los resultados apoyan estudios anteriores que encontraron que el uso de IRS mejoró el compromiso y la interacción de los estudiantes. También proporcionan pruebas adicionales de que el uso de Kahoot! Mayor motivación y mejor adquisición de vocabulario para exámenes posteriores. Los resultados de la encuesta de satisfacción de los estudiantes indicaron que los estudiantes disfrutaron jugando Kahoot! Y lo encontró fácil de usar. Es necesario utilizar la tecnología de aula en las aulas de idiomas para mejorar el aprendizaje, y la gamificación es uno de los últimos enfoques utilizados en las clases de idiomas. Kahoot! es una plataforma que puede utilizarse también para la evaluación informal.

Palabras clave: Kahoot !, IRS, tecnología de aula, gamificación, aprendizaje basado en juegos, evaluación informal.



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1. INTRODUCTION

The use of vocabulary terms is essential when learning a language. Many of the words that students are expected to learn in English Classroom are still unfamiliar to them as they have different meanings (Carrier, 2012). In addition to the possible lack of correspondence between individual words and individual meanings, the term word also has difficulties with the various grammatical and morphological permutations of vocabulary. It is not all that clear whether walk, walked, walking, and walks should be counted as a single word or four (Schmitt, 2008). Acquisition of these vocabulary terms is important and students must be able to communicate using these concepts as they move through their learning process (Kinahan, 2001). Wang (2016) research shows that implementing the interactive response system (IRS) increased students' motivation and they seemed to be engaged. These results were corroborated by (Chuan, 2015; Heaslip, Donovan, & Cullen 2013; Lin, Liu, & Chu 2011; McDonough & Foote, 2015). Abrams and Walsh (2014) found that using technology-based games for vocabulary instruction increased student vocabulary assessment scores from a low level B average before the game to a low A average after the game was played. Yip and Kwan (2006) investigated the effects of online games on student focus during vocabulary instruction. They found that the experimental group outperformed the control group on vocabulary assessments (Yip & Kwan, 2006).

Because studies have demonstrated that using IRS applications in courses in other areas promotes learning gains and engagement (Mayer et al., 2009), this study aimed to further explore the use of IRS Kahoot! (<https://getkahoot.com/>) in learning vocabulary in an English Class.

According to Dellos (2015), Kahoot! is a student response system that engages students through game-like pre-made or impromptu quizzes, discussions and surveys, also mention by (Byrne, 2013; Cross, 2014; Kahoot!, 2014; Thomas, 2014), Kahoot! is an online global educational brand that offers a free student response platform. Kahoot! Is an evolution of the previous clicker technology with the exception that it is free and easy to learn and use. Educators use Kahoot! to create game-based quizzes, discussions and surveys (Plump, 2017).

Students sign in using the web address <https://kahoot.it> to access the platform. Kahoot can be used with smartphones, tablets, laptop computers and with wireless connection. Students can play individually or choose team mode to use one device per group. Students



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get into the platform using only a pin which is given by the instructor. Students do not need to register for an account or download an application, which can waste time and complicate the process (Plump, 2017).

There are a variety of options when writing questions on this platform. Options include uploading videos, pictures and music to animate students with their thinking or simply provide upbeat energy to the quiz. Questions can be timed from 10 to 120 seconds in order to give students opportunity to choose the correct option for the showed question. Both the question and answers have character limits. Questions are limited to 80 characters while the answers to questions are limited to 60 characters (Graham, 2015).

Graham (2015) points out that discussion kahoots consists of only one questions with no right or wrong answer and no points assigned; results are displayed at the end of the timed answer period and can be used to start a debate. Similarly, Survey kahoots do not have right or wrong or assign points, however they may include any number of questions.

In addition, Graham (2015) mentions that Kahoot! has a big user community of instructors willing to share their experiences. Check out the “Kahoot! Journal” to find out some more help such as “hacks, tips on getting started, free learning games, and other inspiring ways to play Kahoot! (<http://blog.getkahoot.com/>)

2. METHODS

The experiment was held during the term March 2017 – August 2017 at Universidad Técnica de Ambato during 10 weeks. Starting on April 17th and ending in June 15th. There were two groups which were called Experiment groups (EG); each one with 35 students. And there was an extra group with the same number of students (35) which was called control group (CG). They all were undergraduate students from different Faculties and careers and the level of English was Pre-intermediate (B1 corresponding to the European Common Framework). Students’ ages varied between 20 to 22 years old. There were 22 males and 48 females in the EG. They were from different social groups (low to intermediate social economical class). In the CG there were 12 males and 23 females. The EG students were asked before the experience if they had their own mobile phone with internet access. 100 % of them had their own mobile phone, not sophisticated but at least with wireless connection, which was very helpful for the experiment.

The teacher conducted the course implementing the platform Kahoot! with a ten-question game at the end of each unit as a review vocabulary on the EGs. (Each student’s book



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unit was checked and covered in one week approximately). There was a pre-test at the end of the fifth week and a final test at the end of the tenth week. The intervention students were also asked to write a weekly self-assessment diary in order to have qualitative data, and to note down their learning reflections on the course. Both qualitative and quantitative data were collected. In order to explore how much they liked the use of the platform Kahoot!, a Likert survey was given at the conclusion of the experiment phase. Results were analyzed and calculated percentages.

3. RESULTS

The tool Kahoot! Adopted for the present study is a cloud-based IRS, developed by the team Kahoot!AS, from the Norwegian University of Technology and Science. The purpose of using this tool was to investigate the effectiveness of the online Kahoot! in vocabulary acquisition when teaching English in a language classroom. In terms of improving the effectiveness of the tool and according to the pre-test and post-test results, participants increased their mean vocabulary scores during the final test.

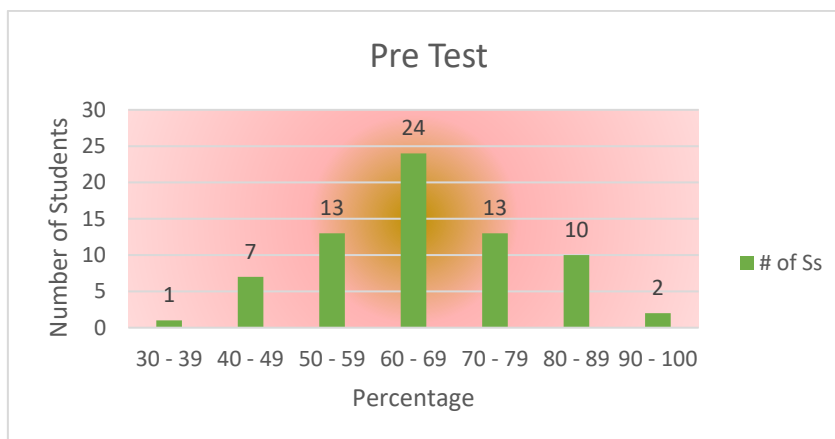


Figure 1. Pre-test results. Vocabulary assessment week 5.



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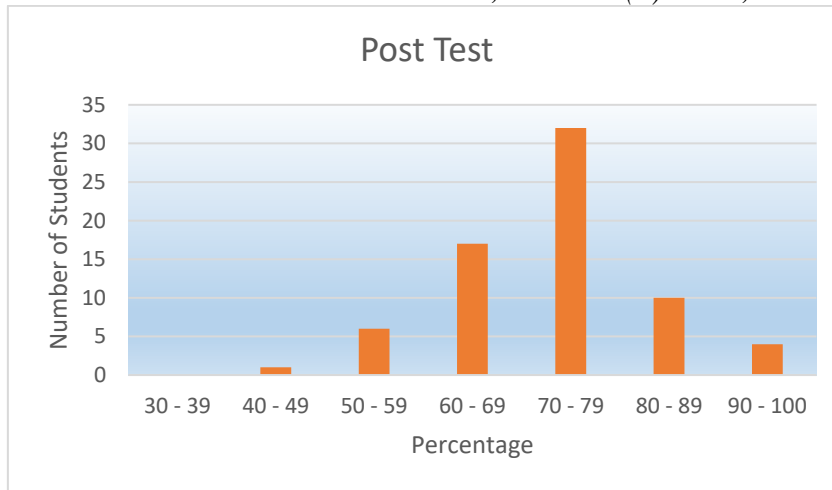


Figure 1. Post-test results. Vocabulary assessment week 10.

Table 1. Student Satisfaction Survey.

Statement	Strongly agree %	Agree %	Undecided %	Disagree %	Strongly disagree %
1. I found Kahoot! Easy.	91	9	0	0	0
2. Kahoot! Game kept me on task.	60	24	16	0	0
3. I would rather use technology to stay on task.	51	32	9	8	0
4. Kahoot! Game is a distraction.	0	10	0	23	67
5. I enjoyed using the game in class.	78	17	5	0	0
6. Kahoot! Helps me being prepared for exams.	49	25	18	8	0

In terms of satisfaction with Kahoot!, 100 % of the students indicate they found easy to use; 84 % of them indicated that it kept them on task; in addition, 83 % of the students indicated that they prefer to use technology in the classroom. 90 % of them considered the use of Kahoot! was not a distraction. 95 % of the students in the survey enjoyed the game in class. Finally 74% of the surveyed students agreed that the use of Kahoot! helped them to be prepared for the formal exams.



Limitations.

The results of this study may have been different if there was not a wireless connectivity. Another limitation for the present study was the limited time in class because the institution hurries up with the covering of the student's book.

4. CONCLUSION

Games like Kahoot! are an excellent choice for teaching university students, in any subject and especially when teaching and practicing vocabulary in a language class. Students are eager to use their mobile phone or tablets and implement technology into the classroom. These eLearning tools provide a positive environment in the classroom, increase energy and add fun. Motivation is one extra element that has to be considered, because students demonstrate a friendly competition and cooperative learning (Malamed, 2012).

This study was encouraging as it shows the positive effect that playing Kahoot! improves motivation and the students' satisfaction is positive.

Further studies are recommended to be conducted different skills that language needs to be developed.

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