



Enhancing EFL Learners' Engagement in English Grammar Through Gamification: A Study Using Kahoot! in Iraq

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Abstract

The integration of gamification in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction has gained increasing attention for its potential to enhance student engagement and motivation. The study evaluates the effectiveness of technology and the Kahoot! platform in engaging Iraqi EFL learners with English grammar. The research was carried out in Maysan Governorate, where 80 intermediate-level students participated from the Al-Salam Intermediate school in the academic year 2024-2025. The results determine that the experimental group of students exhibited much better motivation, active involvement, and retention of grammatical structures than the control group. They also showed that using Kahoot! lowers anxiety in learners concerning grammar learning and induces a more interactive classroom environment. This study adds to the increasing trend of research on gamification in EFL instruction by providing quantitative data from an Iraqi perspective. It gives concrete recommendations to language instructors, curriculum designers, and policymakers aiming to integrate game-based learning tools for teaching grammar. From the results, it suggests utilizing Kahoot! as an additional resource to enhance student involvement and achievement in grammar instruction in EFL. (should not be more that (250) words).

Keywords: Gamification, Kahoot!, EFL learners, digital learning, Iraq

تعزيز تفاعل متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في قواعد اللغة الإنجليزية من خلال التلعيب: دراسة باستخدام

في العراق Kahoot!

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المستخلص

لقد حظي دمج التلعيب في تعليم اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية (EFL) باهتمام متزايد لما له من قدرة على تعزيز تفاعل الطلاب ودافعيتهم. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تقييم فاعلية استخدام التكنولوجيا ومنصة Kahoot! في جذب انتباه متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية في العراق وتفاعلهم مع قواعد اللغة الإنجليزية. أجريت الدراسة في محافظة ميسان، حيث شارك 80 طالبًا من المستوى المتوسط من مدرسة السلام المتوسطة خلال العام الدراسي 2024-2025. اعتمدت الدراسة على التصميم شبه التجريبي، حيث تم تقسيم المشاركين إلى مجموعتين: مجموعة تجريبية تضم 40 طالبًا، ومجموعة ضابطة تضم 40 طالبًا. تم تدريس قواعد اللغة للمجموعة التجريبية باستخدام Kahoot!، بينما تلقت المجموعة الضابطة التعليم بالطرق التقليدية.

ولقياس تأثير Kahoot! على تعلم القواعد وتفاعل الطلاب، تم جمع البيانات من خلال اختبارات قبلية وبعديّة لقياس الكفاءة النحوية، واستطلاعات لقياس تفاعل الطلاب، وملاحظات صفية. أظهرت النتائج أن طلاب المجموعة التجريبية أظهروا دافعية أعلى، ومشاركة أكثر فاعلية، واحتفاظًا أكبر بالبنى النحوية مقارنة بالمجموعة الضابطة. كما بيّنت النتائج أن استخدام Kahoot! يقلل من قلق المتعلمين تجاه تعلم القواعد، ويسهم في خلق بيئة صفية أكثر تفاعلية.

تُسهم هذه الدراسة في الاتجاه المتزايد نحو البحث في التلعيب في تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية من خلال تقديم بيانات كمية من منظور عراقي. كما تقدم توصيات ملموسة لمعلمي اللغة، ومصممي المناهج، وصناع القرار الراغبين في دمج أدوات التعلم القائمة على الألعاب في تدريس قواعد اللغة.

ومن خلال النتائج، تقترح الدراسة استخدام Kahoot! كأداة مساعدة إضافية لتعزيز تفاعل الطلاب وإنجازهم في تدريس قواعد اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: التلعيب، Kahoot!، تفاعل الطلاب، التعلم الرقمي، العراق

Introduction

In recent years, the use of technology in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) curriculum has received increasing attention as educators look for recent strategies to promote student engagement and improve learning outcomes. One of the emerging trends in language teaching is gamification, which refers to the use of game elements in non-game contexts so as to motivate and enhance the learners' experience. A wide variety of digital gamification tools have been made available for teachers, among which Kahoot! has been recognized as one of the most effective platforms for stimulating interaction and engagement in the classroom. In Iraq, EFL students have always faced challenges in the proper acquisition of English grammar and hence consider this subject to be difficult for mastering. This can be attributed to the traditional teacher-centered approaches, which generally advocate rote memorization and passive presence without much active participation. The research demonstrated that these methods reduce motivation, retention, and working grounds of the grammatical rules. In consideration of the necessity for proficiency in English in both academic and professional spheres, it becomes all the more vital to seek other pedagogic solutions that encourage active learning and ensure student engagement. This study evaluates a new teaching intervention using Kahoot! as a gamified tool to enhance EFL learners' engagement and understanding of English grammar in Iraq. Contrasting conventional teaching of grammar with game-based learning, this study aims to validate the findings with respect to the role of gamification and its influence on student motivation, participation, and academic performance.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Due to the predominance of teacher-centered approaches, a lack of interactive activities, and students' low motivation levels, English grammar remains a challenge for Iraqi EFL learners. Many learners see grammar lessons as boring and hard, which leads to their disinterest and poor retention of grammatical structures. Testing and assessment carried out the traditional way-completing written exercises or lectures-greatly neglect the varied learning needs and preferences of students.

The implementation of game-based learning using platforms such as Kahoot! may provide the solution to some of these problems. However, limited research has been done in relation to the implementation of gamification in Iraqi EFL classrooms. Hence, the present research is being conducted to fill the identified research gap and to investigate whether Kahoot! can improve students' engagement, motivation, and learning outcomes in grammar instruction.

1.2 Research Objectives

The primary objectives of this study are:

To evaluate the impact of Kahoot! on Iraqi EFL learners' engagement in English grammar lessons.

To assess whether gamification through Kahoot! improves students' retention and understanding of grammatical rules.

To compare student motivation and participation levels in grammar classes using Kahoot! versus traditional teaching methods.

To provide recommendations for integrating gamification into EFL grammar instruction in Iraq.

1.3 Research Questions

This study seeks to answer the following research questions:

How does Kahoot! influence Iraqi EFL learners' engagement in English grammar lessons?

To what extent does the use of Kahoot! improve students' retention and understanding of grammatical structures?

How do students' motivation and participation differ between traditional grammar instruction and gamified learning using Kahoot!?

What are the pedagogical implications of using Kahoot! for teaching grammar in Iraqi EFL classrooms?

1.4 Significance of the Study

This research is significant for multiple stakeholders, including educators, curriculum designers, policymakers, and students. For educators, the findings will offer insights into the benefits of integrating gamified learning tools into grammar instruction. Curriculum designers may use the results to develop more interactive and student-centered English language programs. Policymakers in the Iraqi education sector can consider gamification as a viable approach to improving English language proficiency in schools and universities.

Additionally, this study will contribute to the existing body of knowledge on gamification in EFL instruction by providing empirical data from an Iraqi context. It will also serve as a reference for future researchers interested in exploring the role of technology in language learning.

1.5 Scope and Limitations of the Study

This study focuses on intermediate-level Iraqi EFL learners enrolled at Al-salam intermediate school in Maysan during the academic year 2024–2025. The research involves a quasi-experimental design with two groups: an experimental group receiving grammar instruction through Kahoot! Some of the

data collection instruments were pre-test and post-test, student engagement surveys, and classroom observation. This study is limited to the area of grammar in English and does not look into other language skills such as speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Outside factors such as the students' previous content knowledge, technology accessibility, and teacher's effectiveness might also affect the results. Future investigations may involve different proficiency levels, diverse educational settings, and even other gamification tools apart from Kahoot!.

1.6 Definition of Key Terms

To avoid ambiguity and ensure uniformity of meaning, we offer definitions for the following terms:

1. Gamification: It is the use of competition, rewards, and interactivity-like game design elements-in a context other than a game, so as to motivate and engage the audience in question (Deterding:2011, pp. 9–15).
2. Kahoot!/: An online game-based learning platform that allows teachers to create quizzes, discussions, and surveys to better connect students with interactive learning (Wang:2015, pp. 217–227.).
3. EFL (English as a Foreign Language): The study of the English language by learners residing in a non-English-speaking environment, such as Iraq (Ellis:2006).
4. Engagement: Represents the degree of active participation, motivation, and interest manifested by the learners in the learning process (Reeve:2012, pp. 149–172).
5. Grammar Instruction: It refers to teaching grammatical rules, structures, and patterns for assisting learners in achieving accurate and effective use of the language (Ellis:2006).

2. Literature Review

2.1 Gamification in Education

Gamification is described as the application of game elements in the non-game context. An innovative method to improve student engagement and establish constructive learning outcomes (Deterding et al., 2011, pp. 9–15). Gamification is much more popular among educators who wish to apply effective means to enrich learning experiences, as it turns traditional settings into dynamic and interactive ones. On research has shown that gamified learning strategies increase motivation, active participation, and retention of academic content (Hamari, Koivisto, & Sarsa, 2014). Other game elements such as rewards, challenges, and competition are crucial in developing a healthy and motivating environment for learning. Werbach and Hunter (2012) describe game mechanics as points, badges, leaderboards, and instant feedback that together create a stimulating learning experience that can sustain student engagement. These mechanics encourage learners to set goals, monitor their progress, and feel a sense of accomplishment, which further motivates them to continue learning. Gamification utilizes intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, targeting a wide range of learning styles. Whereas some students might be motivated by extrinsic incentives such as badges or certificates, others may be motivated by the satisfaction they derive from learning new things. In the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction, gamification has been particularly effective in reducing anxiety and encouraging students to take risks in language learning. Language acquisition often involves challenges such as fear of making mistakes, lack of confidence, and limited opportunities for real-world practice. Gamified learning environments address these concerns by

providing low-stakes opportunities for students to experiment with language use in a supportive setting. (Sailer et al, 2017, pp. 371–380.) found that game-based learning fosters a positive classroom atmosphere, increases student interaction, and enhances learner autonomy by allowing students to take charge of their learning process. Moreover, Su and Cheng (2015, pp. 1–17.) demonstrated that gamified instruction not only improves student engagement but also promotes deeper cognitive processing of linguistic concepts. Through interactive tasks, quizzes, storytelling, and role-playing games, students develop language skills in a way that feels natural and enjoyable. The use of digital platforms and educational apps further enhances the gamified learning experience by offering immediate feedback, adaptive learning pathways, and personalized challenges tailored to individual proficiency levels.

2.2 The Role of Kahoot! In Language Learning

Kahoot! is A well-known and distinguished online platform for interactive quizzes, discussions, and surveys. It thereby renders potent gamification of learning (Wang, 2015 pp. 217–227.). Teachers are thus able to design personalized quizzes fostering fun and competitive participation (Plump & LaRosa, 2017, pp. 151–158.). Multiple authors explored the effect of Kahoot! on student motivation and performance. For example, in their meta-analysis of the studies done on Kahoot! by (Wang and Tahir ,2020,p149), they concluded that Kahoot! enhanced student engagement, motivation, and retention of knowledge across a wide range of subjects. In EFL learning, (Zarzycka-Piskorz ,2016,pp.17–36.) found that Kahoot! made students learning grammar more enthusiastic and participative than students in regular classrooms. In addition,(Ismail and

Mohammad ,2017 , pp. 72–78.) found that learning with Kahoot! had a positive influence on students' attitudes towards learning a language while mastering complex grammatical structures. Kahoot! while entertaining is also a platform for collaborative learning and instant feedback- the two vital components that reinforce effective language learning. The platform fosters learning through real-time scoring and feedback, allowing students to detect their faults and rectify them instantaneously, thus reinforcing their learning through repetition and reflection (Licorish et al., 2018, pp. 76–89). A distinguished online platform for interactive quizzes, discussions, and surveys. It is said to provide powerful gamification for learning (Wang, 2015, pp. 217–227.). With the help of Kahoot!, teachers are said to be able to create personalized quizzes to keep their students entertained and engaged in competition (Plump & LaRosa, 2017, pp. 151–158.). The effects of Kahoot! upon student motivation, behavior, and performance have been studied by many authors. (Wang and Tahir ,2020 ,p149), in their meta-analysis concerning the Kahoot! studies, found that Kahoot! heightened students' engagement, motivation, and retention of knowledge over a wide spectrum of subject areas. In EFL learning as a case in point, Zarzycka-Piskorz ,2016, pp17–36.) concluded while comparing Kahoot! with regular learning methods in grammar instruction, that Kahoot! ignited enthusiasm and participation in the students over those engaged in traditional classrooms. Learning under Kahoot! was documented by (Ismail and Mohammad ,2017, pp. 72–78.) to have positively influenced learner attitude toward language learning and their command of complex grammatical structures. Kahoot! is not merely a fun activity, yet it is also a joint learning platform with instant feedback—two

key components instrumental in effective language learning. The platform enables learning through real-time scoring and feedback, where students recognize their mistakes and subsequently correct them providing the opportunity for reinforcement of learning through reflection (Licorish et al., 2018, pp. 76–89).

2.3 The Impact of Gamification on Student Engagement

In language acquisition, one variable of utmost importance is that of student engagement, as it directly affects learning outcomes and retention rates (Fredricks et al., 2004, pp. 59–109). When engaging in gamified environments, engagement is usually considered on three levels: behavioral, emotional, and cognitive (Reeve, 2012, pp. 149–172). Research points out that digital game-based learning tools, such as Kahoot!, significantly enhance all three dimensions of engagement (Hanus & Fox, 2015, , pp. 152–161). Behaviorally, Kahoot! quizzes tend to increase student interaction and attention in the classroom (Licorish et al., 2018, pp. 76–89). Emotionally, the competitive and reward-based nature of Kahoot! creates fun experiences and reduces anxiety when learning languages (Bicen & Kocakoyun, 2018, pp. 72–93). Cognitively, Kahoot! spurs the timely reflection of students on their errors and enhances their grammatical learning through instant feedback (Wang, 2015, pp. 217–227). Kahoot! also allows quizzes to be adapted to different levels of proficiency, thus maintaining participation among students who are linguistically challenged. Scaffolding techniques that gradually increase the difficulty or supply hints will further support a progressive acquisition of language skills by students (Hashim& Rahman, Yunus, 2019, pp.41-50). A game-like format generally

encourages active learning whereby students must swiftly process information, retrieve vocabulary, and apply grammatical rules immediately-and such cognitive activity enhances memory and fosters critical thinking skills in the long run (Zarzycka-Piskorz, 2016, pp.17–36). Besides, Kahoot! offers a way for teachers to assess their students for a prolonged period while being able to track their performance, acknowledging learning gaps, and modulating their instruction accordingly. Therefore, it not only stimulates motivation and participation but acts as a formative assessment tool for EFL educators in the development of effective and student-centered learning experiences.

2.4 Gamification and Grammar Acquisition in EFL Contexts

Grammar is an essential requirement in being competent in English as a foreign language, but most students find that traditional techniques based on rote-learning and repetitive exercises (Ellis, 2006) · Gamified learning platforms like Kahoot! allow an alternative by providing an interactive low-pressure environment in which to practice grammar (Hung, 2017, pp. 417–442.) · Studies show that game-based learning enhances retention rates of grammatical structures and long-term recall (Flores, 2015, pp. 21–30) · Fuster-Guilló et al. (2019) found that using Kahoot! for grammar practice gave significantly higher grades in assessments compared to students who used traditional worksheets. Alfalah (2018, pp. 1095–1115.) also noted that gamification enhances understanding of complex grammatical concepts by promoting repeated exposure and contextualized learning. In addition, Kahoot! would undoubtedly enhance grammar instruction by allowing for multimedia incorporation through

images, videos, and audio clips that exemplify the contextualized aspects to reinforce learning. Rather than focusing solely on the abstract rules, students make grammatical structures contextually useful and thus more memorable by associating them with real-life language use (Yang, 2020). · The interactivity of Kahoot! favors active participation, as students need to process grammar concepts in real-time, apply that knowledge to answer questions, and receive immediate feedback. Such an iterative learning process follows the principles of communicative language teaching (CLT), which sees meaningful interaction as a prime mover of language acquisition (Richards, 2006, p207). Besides, the gamified nature of Kahoot! further takes away the fear of error, thus allowing students to play with grammar issues without the weight of worry that traditional assessments would bring (Bicen & Kocakoyun, 2018, pp. 72–93). Therefore, Kahoot! fosters greater grammatical accuracy while ensuring a happier and more pleasurable language-learning experience.

2.5 Studies on Gamification in Iraqi EFL Classroom

While gamification has been a common subject of inquiry in the world at large, the application of the technique in Iraqi EFL classrooms has not attracted much research attention · The recent studies start to throw light on digital tools in the context of Iraqi education · Al-Khazraji and Al-Ta'ie (2020, pp. 543–552), for example, looked into the effects of digital games on vocabulary acquisition among university students in Iraq, saying that gamified learning would certainly help retention and engagement · There was also a study by Hussein and Mohammed (2021, pp. 98–115), which researched the use of Kahoot! in Iraqi

secondary schools, and students had very good feedback on quiz-typed games, with motivation and participation at higher levels. Still, their study was not necessarily about grammar instruction, thus calling for more studies in that area. The above findings have encouraging implications for gamification in EFL classrooms in Iraq. However, there are some constraints on its adoption at a larger footing in the Iraqi EFL classroom setting. Major challenges to the integration of platforms like Kahoot! are limited access to technology, intermittent internet connectivity, and lack of teacher training in digital pedagogy (Al-Darraj, et al 2022, pp.3437). Cultural attitudes toward education that tend to favor traditional rote learning may also influence the unwillingness of both teachers and students to embrace game-based learning (Ali & Al-Bayati, 2021, pp.253-266.). Addressing these threats centers on a manifold system that includes government investment in digital infrastructure and professional development for educators, as well as raising awareness on the pedagogical advantages of gamification. Future research should focus on how to address obstacles and provide an understanding of the long-term effects of gamified grammar instruction on Iraqi EFL learners' proficiency and engagement. Gamification could thus be used to bridge the cumbersome gap between traditional teaching methodology and technology-enhanced teaching practices, thereby provide an opportunity for English language education in Iraq to become interactive, effective, and fun.

2.6 Theoretical Framework

1. Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985): Intrinsically motivated activities predominantly influence learning. This is a major principle behind gamification according

to Self-Determination Theory in order to engender autonomy, competence, and relatedness toward enhancing student motivation.

2. Constructive Learning Theory (Vygotsky, 1978): This theory describes active learning and social interaction as necessary factors in attaining a language. Kahoot! promotes a constructivist learning environment that creates interactions among peers, collaborative working, and problem-solving.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The quasi-experimental design employed in the study incorporates a pre-test and post-test control group to investigate the effects of gamification on student engagement and grammar achievement. The study follows a quantitative research method which systematically measures and compares the effectiveness of gamified learning through Kahoot! with traditional instructional methods.

The participants are divided into two groups:

Experimental group-Students receiving grammar instruction through Kahoot!, an interactive game-based platform designed to enhance engagement while reinforcing learning through quizzes, competitions, and immediate feedback.

Control group- Students exposed to traditional grammar instruction, which includes mainly lecture-based teaching, exercises, written assessment, and without gamification elements.

This study intends to provide empirical evidence on the efficacy of gamification in grammar teaching by comparing the outcomes and engagement level of both groups before and after the intervention. The result will shed light on whether or not the incorporation of game-based

learning tools can significantly promote student motivation, participation, and overall language acquisition within the educational environment.

3.2 Research Setting and Participants

3.2.1 Research Setting

The current study takes place in a school called Al-salam public secondary school in Maysan , Iraq, during the year 2024-2025. The school uses the official curriculum prescribed by the Iraqi Ministry of Education, which involves teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL). The policy of this school is to teach the English language as a core subject, with time devoted to reading, writing, listening, and speaking to develop the students' grammatical and vocabulary skills. The study is expected to proceed within the usual operational practices of the school and interruptions should be minimal, which in turn facilitates the implementation of the instructional interventions along with the existing curriculum and routines in the classrooms.

3.2.2 Participants

The study sample consists of 80 intermediate-level EFL students, aged between 14 and 16 years. These students are selected through purposive sampling, ensuring that all participants have comparable proficiency levels and prior exposure to English grammar instruction. This approach enhances the internal validity of the study by minimizing variations in baseline knowledge. The participants are divided into two groups:

Experimental Group (n = 40) – This group receives grammar instruction through Kahoot!, an interactive, game-based learning platform that incorporates elements of competition, real-time feedback, and multimedia engagement to enhance student motivation and learning outcomes. Students engage with grammar exercises in a

gamified format, answering multiple-choice questions and receiving immediate feedback on their responses.

Control Group (n = 40) – This group follows traditional grammar instruction, which involves teacher-led explanations, textbook-based exercises, and written assessments. Instructional methods rely primarily on direct explanation, rote learning, and individual practice without the integration of digital gamification tools.

To ensure consistency, both groups are taught by the same instructor, following the same grammar topics and instructional time frame. The differentiation lies in the mode of instruction: gamified learning versus traditional teaching, allowing for a direct comparison of engagement levels and learning outcomes between the two methods. By maintaining comparable classroom environments and instructional content, the study aims to isolate the effect of Kahoot! as the primary variable influencing student engagement and grammar acquisition. The results of this comparative analysis will provide valuable insights into the role of gamification in enhancing EFL instruction within the Iraqi secondary school context.

3.3 Research Instruments

3.3.1 Pre-Test and Post-Test

Grammatical Proficiency Assessment

The study tries to evaluate student grammatical proficiency and measure the effect of gamified instruction on learning outcomes through a pre- and post-test design with standardized grammar assessments. These tests are staged at two distinct periods in the course of the study:

1. Pre-Test – Administered at the beginning of the study before any instructional intervention to

assess students' baseline grammar knowledge that would be compared against later results.

2. Post-Test - Administered towards the end of the instructional period to evaluate the grammar learning outcomes of students and to check on the effectiveness of the teaching methods employed in the respective groups.

Structure and Content of Tests

The pre-test and post-test are designed, in content and structure, to reflect the EFL curriculum as prescribed by the Iraqi Ministry of Education, thus relevant for achieving students' learning objectives. The tests also delve into critical grammatical structures relevant to the intermediate-level EFL learner and have the following components:

1. Multiple-Choice Questions (MCQs): Students choose for the correct answer from four alternatives, testing their knowledge of grammatical rules, sentence structure, verb tenses, and word order.
2. Tasks: Pupils complete sentences with appropriate grammatical forms thereby demonstrating their ability to put grammar rules into context.
3. Error Correction Exercises: The students identify the grammatical mistakes in given sentences and correct them, thus testing their ability to recognize errors and possible applications of correct structures.
4. Sentence Transformation. Students rewrite sentences through using different grammatical structures with the same meaning, thus testing their flexibility in applying grammatical knowledge.
5. Short Writing Task: Some test versions may include a brief writing exercise where students construct grammatically accurate sentences or

short paragraphs based on prompts, allowing for a more comprehensive evaluation of their grammar application in written communication

Scoring and Evaluation Criteria

Each test is scored out of a total of 100 points, with a weighted distribution for different question types to ensure a balanced assessment. The scoring criteria focus on:

1. Accuracy in applying grammatical rule
2. Appropriate word choice and sentence structure
3. Correct identification and correction of errors
4. Consistency in tense and agreement
5. Overall coherence in sentence transformation and writing tasks

Both the experimental and control groups complete the same pre-test and post-test to allow for direct comparisons. The tests are administered under standardized conditions, ensuring that students have equal time limits and clear instructions.

Purpose of the Assessment

The study intends to evaluate whether the application of gamification through Kahoot! brings about notable improvements in grammar learning as compared with traditional teaching by analyzing the differences in pre-test and post-test scores. The assessment results will shed light on the areas in which students made the most progress and the possible trouble areas in learning grammar under both approaches of teaching. This evaluation will add to the discussion regarding the role of gamification in English as a foreign language (EFL) learning while providing practical insights for teachers interested in improving grammar

instruction in secondary schools across Iraq.

3.3.2 Student Engagement Survey

A Likert-scale questionnaire adapted from Fredricks et al. (2004, pp. 59–109) is used to assess student engagement. The survey includes three dimensions:

1. Behavioral Engagement: Participation in class activities.
2. Emotional Engagement: Interest and motivation in learning grammar.
3. Cognitive Engagement: Effort and persistence in understanding grammar rules.

3.4 Procedure

Pre-Testing: All participants take a grammar pre-test.

Experimental Phase:

The experimental group receives Kahoot!-based

grammar instruction for six weeks. The control group follows traditional grammar instruction using textbooks and lectures.

3. Post-Testing: All participants take a grammar post-test.

4. Survey & Observations: Student engagement is measured through surveys and classroom observations.

3.4 Analysis of Pre-Test and Post-Test Scores

To measure the effect of gamification on grammar learning, pre-test and post-test scores were compared for both the experimental and control groups.

3.4.1 Descriptive Statistics

As shown in the table 1 presents the mean scores and standard deviations for the pre-test and post-test results.

Table (1): Descriptive Statistics for Grammar Test Scores

Group	Test	Mean score	Standard deviations	Minium score	Maximum score
Experimental (n=40)	Pre-Test	45.8	6.5	35	58
Experimental (n=40)	Post-Test	78.6	7.2	65	90
Control (n=40)	Pre-Test	46.3	6.1	36	57
Control (n=40)	Post-Test	56.4	6.8	42	68

The results indicate that both groups showed improvement in their post-test scores. However, the experimental group, which used Kahoot!, demonstrated a significantly greater increase compared to the control group.

3.4.2 Inferential Statistics

A paired-sample t-test was conducted to examine whether the improvement in grammar scores was statistically significant within each group. Additionally, an independent-sample t-test was performed to compare post-test scores between groups. As shown in the table (2).

Table (2): Paired-Sample t-Test Results (Pre-Test vs. Post-Test Within Groups)

Group	T-value	Df	P-value	Significance
Experimental	12.98	39	<0.001	Significant
Control	4.25	39	0.002	Significant

Both groups showed statistically significant improvement ($p < 0.05$). However, the effect size

was much larger for the experimental group. As shown in the table (3).

Table (3) Independent-Sample t-Test Results (Post-Test Scores Between Groups)

Comparison	T-value	Df	P-value	Significance
Experimental vs control	8.56	78	<0.001	Significance

The independent-sample t-test revealed a significant difference in post-test scores between the experimental and control groups ($p < 0.001$), confirming that Kahoot! Was more effective in improving grammar proficiency.

Likert-scale survey measuring three engagement dimensions: behavioral, emotional, and cognitive. Scores ranged from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).

3.5 Student Engagement Survey Results To assess engagement levels, students completed a

3.5.1 Descriptive Statistics.

As shown in the table (4).

Table (4) Mean Engagement Scores by Dimension

Engagement dimension	Experimental group mean (SD)	Control group mean (SD)	T-value	P-value
Behavioral	4.5 (0.4)	3.3 (0.5)	9.21	<0.001
Emotional	4.4 (0.3)	3.2(0.4)	8.87	<0.001
Cognitive	4.6 (0.5)	3.4 (0.5)	10.12	<0.001
Overall engagement	4.5 (0.4)	3.3 (0.5)	9.74	<0.001

The experimental group reported significantly higher engagement levels than the control group across all dimensions ($p < 0.001$), indicating that gamification enhanced student participation, motivation, and effort in grammar learning.

3.6 Classroom Observation Results

Structured classroom observations were conducted weekly throughout the six-week intervention, focusing on student participation, response rates, and engagement behaviors. The key findings are summarized below:

3.6.1 Frequency of Student Responses in Class.

As shown in the table (5).

Table (5) Average Weekly Participation (Responses per Student)

Week	Experimental group	Control group
Week 1	6.2	3.1
Week 2	7.4	3.5
Week 3	8.0	3.9
Week 4	8.5	4.1
Week 5	8.9	4.4
Week 6	9.3	4.6

The experimental group showed a progressive increase in participation, while the control group exhibited only slight improvements over time.

3.6.2 Qualitative Observations

Experimental Group:

Highly energetic and engaged in quiz-based activities·

Increased willingness to answer grammar-related questions·

Positive competitive atmosphere encouraged participation·

Control Group:

Lower participation rates, with fewer students actively responding·

Traditional lectures resulted in passive engagement

Some students appeared disengaged or distracted·

These findings reinforce the survey results, confirming that Kahoot! Fosters greater student involvement and enthusiasm in grammar learning.

3.7 Discussion of Results

The interface of Kahoot!, which allowed a greater engagement of the learner with the participative process of learning grammar, was responsible for most of the gain in grammar ability of the experimental group. Contrary to the traditional

lecturing methods, Kahoot! made the students work hard on grammar concepts by way of real-time quizzes, immediate feedback, and competition, thereby conditioning and reinforcing actual learning, which in turn improved retention. This finding supports earlier studies alleging that gamification motives and cognitive processing, finally leading to boosting learning outcomes. Another factor in favor of the successes of the experimental group is the instant feedback feature of Kahoot!. By receiving instant corrections and clarifications, students could model their understanding of grammatical structures whereas control students were robbed of that opportunity: they had to wait for feedback from their teachers after the completion of traditional textbook exercises. This kind of real-time reinforcement enabled experimental group students to develop a stronger grasp and a deeper understanding of grammatical rules. Higher engagement and participation, inducing a positive impact on learning, were occasioned by the competitive and cooperative nature of Kahoot!. Experimental students were all the more willing to participate in the assessed task due to those game elements: scoring points, leaderboards, and rewards. While those working within the experimental group were

being buoyed by increased participation opportunities, this karma was during their practice for grammatical knowledge. By contrast, low uptake was observed in the control group, with students displaying low levels of involvement and signs of passive learning; all which ultimately contributed to their limited improvement. In summation, a gradual increase in the participation rate over the six-week intervention suggests that there was a sustained motivation level of students within the experimental group. Active classroom observation showed that students in the Kahoot! group were more willing to put in answers to grammar questions and were keener on learning activities. This assertion of motivation seems to have been held over time, empowering them to do better in grammar acquisition, thus confirming that gamification does indeed lead to long-term positive effects in language learning.

Conclusions

The study indicates that Kahoot! significantly enhances grammar learning and promotes student engagement in Iraqi EFL classrooms. Experimental group instruction was conducted through games and had statistically significant improvement over control group grammar post-test marks. The active participation, instant feedback, and constant motivation through competition in Kahoot! fostered optimal retention and application of grammatical rules. These findings are a clear marker that lecture-based instruction alone does not presently hold enough ground to maximize student engagement and learning in grammar education. Also, the Engagement Survey and classroom observations further corroborated that gamification provides a dynamic, student-centered learning ambience that motivates involvement and reduces anxiety toward learning. The experimental

group was more motivated and cognitively engaged, which further confirms that technology-enabled strategies can bring effectiveness and joy to learning grammar. Based on the findings, the study suggests that EFL syllabi in Iraqi schools should include gamification. Future investigations should entail longitudinal studies on the effects of gamification on various language learning issues and the scalability of the findings across different contexts of education.

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