



The Impact of Implementing Kahoot on Students' Motivation in English Language Teaching

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ABSTARCT

Student motivation is a determining factor in English language learning within technology-mediated educational processes. This study aimed to analyze the impact of implementing gamified digital tools, such as Kahoot, on student motivation during English language learning. It was conducted using a qualitative approach and a case study design applied at the “Nuestra Señora de Pompeya” Educational Unit, located in Puyo, Ecuador. The sample consisted of three English teachers selected through purposive sampling. Semi-structured interviews and document analysis of lesson plans were used to collect information. The data were processed using thematic analysis and triangulation of sources. The results indicate that Kahoot is associated with high levels of student participation, attention, and positive attitude during learning activities. The teachers reported that the dynamics, based on didactic mechanisms that increased student interaction, were based on activities aimed at reinforcing the language. However, limitations were also found related to the

repetitive use of the platform and institutional restrictions regarding mobile devices. Finally, the study provides contextualized evidence on the pedagogical integration of gamified tools in English language teaching.

Keywords: *gamification, Kahoot, student motivation, English language learning, digital tools, English language teaching.*

RESUMEN

La motivación estudiantil es un factor determinante en el aprendizaje del idioma inglés dentro de los procesos educativos mediados por tecnología. El presente estudio tuvo como objetivo analizar el impacto de la implementación de herramientas digitales gamificadas, como Kahoot, en la motivación de los estudiantes durante el aprendizaje del idioma inglés. La investigación se desarrolló mediante un enfoque cualitativo interpretativo y un diseño de estudio de caso aplicado en la Unidad Educativa “Nuestra Señora de Pompeya”, ubicada en Puyo, Ecuador. La muestra estuvo conformada por tres docentes de inglés seleccionados mediante muestreo intencional. Para la recolección de información se aplicaron entrevistas semiestructuradas y análisis documental de planificaciones didácticas. Los datos fueron procesados mediante análisis temático y triangulación de fuentes. Los resultados establecen que Kahoot se relaciona con niveles elevados de participación, atención y disposición positiva de los estudiantes durante las actividades de aprendizaje. Los docentes expusieron que las dinámicas basadas en mecanismos didácticos que incrementaron la interacción estudiantil, basadas en actividades orientadas al refuerzo del idioma. Sin embargo, también se encontraron limitaciones asociadas al uso repetitivo de la plataforma y a restricciones institucionales relacionadas con dispositivos móviles. Por último, el estudio aporta

evidencia contextualizada sobre la integración pedagógica de herramientas gamificadas en la enseñanza del inglés.

Palabras clave: *gamificación, Kahoot, motivación estudiantil, aprendizaje del idioma inglés, herramientas digitales, enseñanza del idioma inglés*

INTRODUCTION

The teaching of English at the Ecuadorian high school level presents challenges related to student participation during class activities. Although the Ecuadorian Ministry of Education's Foreign Language curriculum establishes the development of communicative competence as the central focus of learning (Guevara et al., 2024), in various educational settings, dynamics centered on repetitive grammar exercises persist, which reduce students' constant interaction with the language.

Motivation, in Ecuadorian's classrooms, is a factor linked to scholars' attention, participation, and active engagement during learning activities (Soto et al., 2024). In response, some educational institutions have begun to incorporate gamified digital tools such as Kahoot, a platform composed of various elements that make learning dynamic. Previous studies have indicated that gamified resources increase student interest during English classes (Rojas et al., 2021; Putra et al., 2022).

Nowadays, there is limited evidence on the impact of these platforms on student motivation in Ecuadorian basic education. Hence, this research is important because it analyzes the use of Kahoot from the perspective of real-world classroom implementation, to integrate the pedagogical dynamics developed by English teachers during learning activities, focuses on dimensions related to student participation, attention, and engagement with tasks developed using gamified tools. The research also provides pertinent data on the pedagogical integration of digital resources in English language teaching within Ecuadorian classrooms, in settings where student participation remains a challenge during class time.

The study was conducted at the "Nuestra Señora de Pompeya" Educational Unit, located in the city of Puyo, Ecuador, with the participation of English teachers who had used gamified tools in their classes. The research employed a qualitative

interpretive approach and a case study design. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews and documentary analysis of lesson plans. This problem led to the following research question: How does the implementation of gamified digital tools like Kahoot influence student motivation during English language learning? Therefore, the overall objective of the study was to analyze the impact of implementing gamified digital tools, such as Kahoot, on student motivation in learning English.

LITERTURE REVIEW

Gamification platforms

Gamification platforms are digital tools that incorporate elements of games, such as points, challenges, and rewards, into the teaching process to make learning motivating, and participatory for language students in high school (Yassin et al., 2025). These are digital learning environments that incorporate game elements into educational activities, in order to transform traditional classes into interactive experiences, where the student actively participates through challenges or rewards that affect their motivation and performance (Li et al., 2025). In this sense, gamification platforms represent a pedagogical shift towards more student-centered instruction, where participation is reinforced through interactive learning experiences.

Kahoot

Digital games, such as Kahoot, serve as an interactive resource within a multimedia educational environment and can enhance learning by making it more engaging and effective, especially for younger learners (Altawalbeh & Irwanto, 2023) Kahoot, according to Guevara et al. (2022), is a free online tool that has gained popularity in recent years, as it provides feedback to students and allocates educators to adjust class content based on the group's level of knowledge. Therefore, integrating tools like

Kahoot represents an important step toward creating dynamic and responsive classrooms that meet the needs of modern learners.

Moreover, Kahoot is a platform that extends quizzes, discussions, and surveys through gamification, featuring distinctive elements from both gaming and teaching models, which makes it interactive and competitive (Kaur & Naderajan, 2019). Regularly, users utilize Kahoot to design, modify, and share quiz-based games, while also enhancing them with graphics and videos (Truong, 2024). These features collectively establish Kahoot not just as a game, but as a versatile and creative toolkit for modern educators.

Motivation

Motivation has long been a central theme in psychology and is now considered a fundamental element in contemporary theories of learning, personality, and social behavior (Seven, 2020). Filgona et al. (2020) argues that motivation is an important component in encouraging students to participate in academic activities and influences the extent to which they learn from the tasks they complete or the information they encounter. Hence, motivation is not merely a peripheral factor but an introductory driver that actively shapes a scholar's engagement and the depth of their learning.

Motivation in the Learning Process

Thohir (2017) states that motivation has been a consistent focus in the history of language teaching and is regarded as essential for attaining successful outcomes in any learning activity. It is a key factor in language learning success, but its exact role remains unclear, as it is difficult to define and measure, and it is not clear whether motivation drives success or whether success enhances motivation (AbdAlgane, 2020). Thus, while the importance of motivation in language learning is undisputed, its precise nature and reciprocal relationship with student success remain a central focus of academic research.

Relationship between Kahoot Motivation in the Learning Process

Rojas et al. (2021) establish that Kahoot is a digital tool that enhances motivation in the teaching-learning process, staging greater scholar attendance and participation in class. Besides, Putra et al . (2022) claims that Kahoot can enhance students' motivation to learn English by providing engaging and interactive learning experiences. In this way, the evidence positions Kahoot as a key strategic tool for educators seeking to harness the power of motivation in the modern language classroom.

Nadima and Halim (2024) add that integrating Kahoot as an educational tool can enhance scholar motivation, interactivity, and satisfaction, thereby improving engagement and academic performance while providing valuable insights for educators using technology. For their part, Orhan and Gürsoy (2019) and Rahman et al. (2023) explain that Kahoot activities can increase students' concentration and motivation through fun competition, thus improving their performance and participation in class. Collectively, these demonstrate that Kahoot's strategic integration fosters a more dynamic and motivating learning environment, which in turn heightens crucial academic behaviors like concentration, participation, and overall performance.

Limitations of Kahoot implementation

Although Kahoot can be associated with increased motivation in English language teaching, several studies have highlighted significant limitations. For example, technical difficulties such as device access problems can disrupt participation and decrease student enthusiasm (Milheim et al., 2021). The platform's competitive, timed format can generate stress, anxiety, or frustration among learners who struggle to respond quickly or don't achieve high scores (Hopkins, 2025). Researchers have also observed that students may focus more on points and winning than on meaningful

language learning, weakening their engagement with the content (Truong , 2025). In simple terms, the platform can offer benefits in language learning, but it should be used with caution; otherwise, it can negatively impact the harmony of language learning.

METHODOLOGY

The study was developed under a qualitative approach of an interpretative nature carried out through a case study design focused on an educational institution. The design was selected to understand contextualized phenomena in depth (Bunkar et al., 2024), such as the integration of gamified digital tools and their impact on student motivation. In agreement with Makateng and Mokala (2025), the qualitative approach is used to analyze the meanings that participants attribute to their experiences in real educational environments. In this sense, the research was aimed at analyzing the perceived impact of the implementation of gamified digital tools, such as Kahoot, on the motivation of students in learning the English language. The research was carried out at the “Nuestra Señora de Pompeya” High School, a mixed-funding institution located in Puyo, Pastaza province. For the development of the study, a formal request was submitted to the principal of the High School, in which the objectives, procedures and scope of the research were specified. It was also indicated that the information collected would be used exclusively for academic purposes, ensuring the confidentiality of the participants and the anonymity of the data obtained.

The sample consisted of three English teachers, selected through intentional sampling by criteria. The inclusion criteria were to work as an active teacher in English, to have experience in basic education and have used gamified digital tools during the school period analyzed. Participants met conditions such as experience in

teaching the English language in basic education, participation in didactic planning processes and use of digital tools in the classroom.

The sample size was guided by the principle of information sufficiency and the thematic recurrence identified during the data collection process.

Two techniques were used for data collection: semi-structured interviews applied to teachers and documentary analysis of didactic plans.

Semi-structured interview: A script of ten open questions focused on the variables of the designed study. The interviews were conducted at previously agreed times with the participants within the educational institution that lasted approximately 25 to 35 minutes. They were recorded in audio and transcribed verbatim to guarantee the fidelity of the information.

Documentary analysis: Three teachers' plans were reviewed by the researcher, and they corresponded to the second quarter of the 2025-2026 academic period. The documents were selected based on their direct relationship with the use of digital resources and teaching strategies to identify the presence, frequency and form of integration of gamified tools in the English language learning process. For the analysis, a structured matrix was used with dimensions such as pedagogical integration, gamification mechanics, linguistic approach and curricular coherence.

Data analysis was developed through thematic analysis following the phases proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006): familiarization with the information, initial coding, search for topics, review and naming of categories. Subsequently, the findings from interviews and documents were contrasted by means of triangulation of sources.

The quality of the study was guaranteed through the validation of the judgment of three experts who work as professors at the English school at a university, who

evaluated the interview through a rubric focused on ensuring that the indicators of the instrument were oriented to meet the proposed objective.

RESULTS

Teachers' perceptions of student motivation in the use of gamified tools such as Kahoot

Increased student participation

The teachers agreed that the incorporation of gamified digital tools favors greater voluntary participation of students during English classes, especially in immediate response activities, vocabulary review and brief grammar exercises. According to one participant, students “become more engaged by responding in an environment of healthy play and competition” (D1). The teacher's opinion is framed in the fact that dynamics based on gamification also reduce the fear of making mistakes in front of the group, giving way to the intervention of students who normally participate less frequently.

Attention during the development of the task

The interviewees pointed out that the dynamic structure of gamified activities can keep the students' attention during certain moments of the class. Elements such as limited response time, visible punctuation, and immediate feedback, according to teachers, are factors associated with sustained interest. For example, one teacher said that digital tools are attractive “they capture the attention of students who tend to be frequently distracted” (D3). The perception of teachers is linked to the execution of short activities oriented to linguistic practice.

Positive emotional disposition

Participants related the use of gamified resources with favorable emotional responses at the beginning and during the activities, in fact, they mentioned

expressions of enthusiasm, interest and positive attitude when interactive platforms are incorporated into the teaching of English. In the words of one teacher, students “almost always show enthusiasm” (D1). In another way, for the interviewees, the variety of digital formats generates a dynamic classroom environment conducive to the receptivity of the student body.

Orientation to academic achievement

The teachers stated that moderate competition and the possibility of repeating attempts create behaviors aimed at personal improvement, they indicated that students try to overcome previous scores to obtain better results in subsequent activities. One of the participants pointed out that “the student seeks to beat his own score” (D3). According to this perception, gamified dynamics stimulate greater effort in revision tasks that are later used for content consolidation.

Conditions of application in the classroom

One of the teachers indicated that within the educational institution there are limitations related to the use of mobile phones in class. That is why some activities should be developed through group projection in the classroom or assigned as autonomous work at home. According to the participant, “the use of cell phones has been prohibited... so the activities are projected or sent home” (D2). The implementation of gamified tools depends on operational conditions that are the result of regulations in the school context.

Results of the documentary analysis

Table 1

Pedagogical integration of Kahoot in planifications

Analytical dimension	Main finding	Documentary evidence	Interpretive analysis
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Pedagogical integration	Kahoot was mainly planned at the beginning and end of classes.	“Starter Quiz”; “Final review game”.	The resource was used to activate previous knowledge and consolidate content at the end of the session.
Gamification mechanics	Time limits, scores, and rankings were frequently incorporated.	“20 seconds per question”; “Earn the highest score.”	These dynamics show the use of extrinsic motivators aimed at increasing student interest and participation.
Student Engagement	The simultaneous response of the whole group was promoted.	“All students get into the game.”	Kahoot encouraged active and immediate participation in the English classroom.
Approach to English learning	The activities focused mainly on vocabulary and grammar.	“Vocabulary challenge”; “Quiz about past tense”.	The tool was mostly used as a language reinforcement strategy.
Curricular coherence	The level of articulation varied among the plans analyzed.	Some sessions linked objectives, activities and evaluation; others do not.	The use of Kahoot oscillated between structured pedagogical integration and isolated complementary application.

According to Table 1, regarding the analysis of the teachers' plans, Kahoot is incorporated at two moments of the class, both at the beginning, as a strategy for activating prior knowledge, and at the end, as a mechanism for review and immediate verification of understanding.

The table also presents a recurrence of elements such as classifications, scoring systems, timers and instant feedback, because the schedules are based on competitive dynamics and rapid response.

In terms of linguistic content, it is shown that the activities are oriented towards the strengthening of vocabulary and grammar, unlike the tasks related to oral and written production that are not sufficient according to the provisions of the national curriculum.

Finally, the curricular articulation presents differences between documents because some plans are explicitly linked to objectives, activities and evaluation, while others

incorporate the platform as a complementary resource without visible pedagogical connection. To put it differently, the formative value of Kahoot in the background analyzed depends on the level of integration within the design of the class.

DISCUSSION

The results obtained establish that the implementation of gamified digital tools such as Kahoot is related to improvements perceived by teachers in the participation, attention and initial disposition of students towards learning English. Both the educator interviews and the documentary analysis showed coincidences in these aspects.

In relation to students' participation, the teachers mentioned that students respond more frequently to immediate activities focused on both vocabulary and grammar. Some researchers have a similar position in their results, pointing out that gamification increases behavioral engagement through brief challenges that facilitate the stimulation of learning (Allehaidan & Nazmee, 2024; Wulan et al., 2024). In learning English, this aspect is relevant, because a continuous response from students increases the opportunities to practice linguistic content that in many cases is useful to maintain active contact with the language during the execution of the class.

The educators mentioned that the sustained attention of the students is attributed to the effect of the characteristic elements of Kahoot, such as the limited response time and the visible score that make learning a competency, making students stay active. Previous research has indicated that gamified platforms concentrate the focus of attention by combining clear objectives with immediate consequences of the response (Qudsi, 2024; Coelho et al., 2025). In other words, by combining elements of competence, learning can become fun, which in turn makes students learn in a

dynamic way that is out of the ordinary, resulting in a meaningful learning experience.

On the other hand, in the emotional dimension, the English educators mentioned that using tools such as kahoot can make students show enthusiasm, interest and positive attitudes, which can reduce students' fear of making mistakes in front of their other classmates. This outcome is suitable in the teaching of English, where communicative anxiety can limit oral participation because the playful format could reduce tension when responding and increase the safety to intervene in class, an aspect also reported in gamification studies (Amnouychokanant, 2025)

The results in the interviews also showed an achievement orientation reflected in the intention to overcome previous scores and obtain better results related to the activation of performance goals and self-improvement. However, the analysis of the schedules found that a large part of the mechanics used are based on rankings, scores and timers; that is, factors that can stimulate extrinsic motivation predominate. It is important to note that the elements that make up Kahoot can increase students' initial interest, but several authors warn that their effect can diminish when it is not accompanied by autonomy that integrates cognitively challenging tasks; along the same lines, some studies have pointed out that initial enthusiasm tends to be reduced when gamification is applied repetitively and without methodological variations (Lashari et al., 2023; Kumar & Vairavan, 2024; Özdemir, 2024).

A relevant finding was that Kahoot is integrated at the beginning of the class to activate previous knowledge and at the end to review content during the class. In general, the functional use of the digital tool is used within specific moments of the didactic sequence that the teacher plans, which may vary from teacher to teacher

due to a partial integration, more linked to activation and reinforcement functions than to complex processes of linguistic production in the development of the tasks. In a complementary way, in the plans it was found that teachers introduce activities oriented to vocabulary and grammar, while oral and written expression tasks had limited presence, this contrasts with Cárdenas et al. (2024) exposed kahoot is a tool that can not only be used to address closed response and rapid verification content, but also for the execution of the task in general. Consequently, there is pedagogical margin to expand its use towards communicative skills that require argumentation oriented to the production and spontaneous use of language.

Likewise, curricular coherence was variable among the plans analyzed, considering that some documents articulated objectives, activities and evaluation, unlike others that only incorporated Kahoot as an isolated complementary resource. This finding indicates that the motivational impact of gamification does not depend only on the platform used, but also on the quality of its pedagogical integration. Cumbe et al. (2026) have a similar position given that when technology is aligned with clear linguistic objectives and defined evaluation criteria, its contribution exceeds the initial novelty effect.

Finally, limitations were also identified, such as institutional restrictions related to the use of mobile phones, which force teachers to plan activities or assign them at home. In simple terms, the effectiveness of kahoot as a gamified resource is conditioned by technological organizational factors and institutional norms. Similarly, the results should be interpreted considering the small number of participants and the contextual nature of the study, so it is not appropriate to establish broad generalizations.

The results establish that Kahoot can enhance motivational dimensions such as participation, attention, enjoyment and achievement orientation in English classes within the analyzed universe as mentioned (Hossain & Younus, 2024), but its use is greater when there is coherent curricular integration accompanied by methodological diversity and tasks that must be linked to substantial linguistic objectives for the development of communicative competence.

CONCLUSIONS

The findings of the present research detail that the implementation of kahoot is associated with greater participation in class, sustained attention, positive affective responses and achievement-oriented behaviors, considering that gamified environments can strengthen the motivational conditions that favor participation in language learning.

Teachers described Kahoot as a useful resource to make classes both interactive and dynamic due to the immediate feedback and competitive mechanics that they perceive as factors that increase participation and reduce students' reluctance to respond in front of their peers because many are afraid of making mistakes and therefore do not participate.

Kahoot is a pedagogical tool that can stimulate extrinsic motivation since it is made up of elements that can generate immediate enthusiasm; however, their long-term effect diminishes if they are not complemented by instruction that fosters autonomy or language challenges that provide opportunities for self-regulation. Therefore, sustained motivation depends less on the platform itself than on the quality of its pedagogical design.

English teachers can get the most out of Kahoot when it is integrated into coherent lesson sequences and extends beyond revision tasks because gamified activities

can be composed of exercises that can strengthen the relationship between students' motivation and communicative competence.

The study recognizes limitations in its execution since it was only based on a small intentional sample that focused on a single institution and employed a qualitative case study design. Therefore, the results are analytically transferable, but not statistically generalizable since no measurable quantitative components were included.

Future research should incorporate student perspectives comparing patterns of implementation at different levels of education by examining the longitudinal effects of gamified interventions through mixed-methods designs exploring the influence of gamification on intrinsic motivation.

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