

# Perceptions of Third-Year TESL Undergraduates on Kahoot as a Gamified Learning Tool in Sri Lanka

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**Abstract—** The rapid and increased technology integration becomes an important position, especially in the language learning context. Kahoot, as a gamification tool, is implemented in English Language learning classrooms. The application of this gamified element is examined in various educational contexts and becomes widespread in higher education due to its significance. Nevertheless, only few studies regarding students' perceptions towards the use of Kahoot among teaching English as a Second Language undergraduates were reported. Therefore, this present study investigates third-year TESL undergraduates' perceptions towards utilising Kahoot in enhancing their English Language skills within their semesters. This research project examines how a focus group of five third-year undergraduates, currently studying at the department of English Language Teaching, University of Kelaniya, has perceived Kahoot as a gamified tool to enhance their learning. Semi-structured interviewing was used as the data collection instrument, where five interviews were conducted in total, with each interview lasting approximately thirty minutes. The collected data were analyzed using the thematic analysis method. The findings of the study provide evidence for the presence of a number of unique perceptions among the interviewed participants. They emphasized that the implementation of Kahoot becomes more effective for their learning, while they overcome a few challenges with the use of Kahoot as a gamified tool. Furthermore, suggestions are discussed for the effective implementation of Kahoot. This study has already reiterated the need to explore this research area further because the studies are very limited. There should be further studies for ESL (English as a Second Language) development. In conclusion, the research has the potential to promote social change by emphasizing the importance of using Kahoot as a gamified element in pedagogy in Sri Lankan universities.

**Keywords—** English Language learning, Effectiveness, Gamified element, Kahoot, Student perceptions

## I INTRODUCTION

Education is viewed as a central element in preparing the knowledge, skills, and attitudes essential for the

personal and professional development of individuals and societies. "Knowledge is becoming the core of country's competitive advantage, and the production and the dissemination of knowledge are parts of the process of development based on an effective Higher Education Policy" [4]. In the higher education context, universities determine the advanced learning backgrounds necessary for cultivating critical thinking, innovative skills, and specialized abilities for learners. Within this framework, assessments play a pivotal role because they foster to measure and build up student learning outcomes with proper guidance of both effective pedagogy and academic progress. With the rapid increase in technology integration, university lecturers tend to use gamified elements to make the lesson more interesting and even effective in understanding the content properly. Among these gamified elements, Kahoot becomes very significant as many lecturers use it to enhance students' language learning skills.

## II RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- How do third-year TESL undergraduates perceive the effectiveness of Kahoot to enhance their language learning?
- What challenges do they experience in the use of Kahoot as a gamified element?

## III LITERATURE REVIEW

Many studies emphasize that integrating technology into the pedagogy becomes effective for a successful teaching and learning process. Charbonneau depicts that integration of technology into lectures could enhance their engagement and decrease off-task behavior [2]. Language learning can be enhanced through technology-assisted language learning. Toth defines that lecturers use Kahoot as a gamified tool to capture the learners' attention to their lessons [5]. Wang indicate that Kahoot as a gamified tool because it has been reported to be effective for enhancing language learning [8]. Kahoot is recognized as the latest digital game-based e-learning and supports teachers to construct assessments [7]. According to Cardenas-Moncada, this gamified tool provides not only informative

content but also fun and interactive activities to learners [1]. Ching depicts that Kahoot provides a way to review and make vocabulary more memorable [3]. Plump and LaRosa expose that most of the participants in his study agreed to have used Kahoot as a gamified tool to understand the concepts appropriately [6]. Although many studies were conducted to investigate the application of Kahoot in the international context, its effectiveness and the challenges were not examined properly in the Sri Lankan context, especially in the tertiary education.

#### IV METHODOLOGY

This study was conducted using final-year Teaching English as a Second Language students in the Department of English Language Teaching of the University of Kelaniya. The sample comprised five undergraduates representing the target group, with 4 female undergraduates and one male undergraduate. In concurrence with ethical practices required of academic research, this study also scrutinized very strict adherence to recommended ethical considerations in conducting research. Accordingly, informed consent forms and participant information sheets were created to receive the genuine consent of the participants for this study. Semi-structured interviews were employed with the interview protocol comprising six open-ended questions to address the research questions. Interview data were analyzed using thematic analysis for the qualitative approach in this study, after coding the raw data.

#### V RESULTS AND EVALUATION

This research was conducted in synchrony with a specific timeframe, spanning over three months to collect and analyze data. The following table also demonstrates the themes and sub-themes. The analysis exposed the themes, namely, enhanced engagement, language skill development, challenges and limitations, and suggestions for the implementation of Kahoot. The themes reflected their positive perceptions, challenges and even the suggestions to implement effectively by addressing the research questions of the study. The learners emphasized that the application of Kahoot makes learning interactive as well as enjoyable. It suggested their motivation and active participation in the lesson in contrast to the learning which happens in a traditional classroom setting. Furthermore, students reported that with the use of Kahoot games, they can have an increased acquisition of vocabulary and grammar. Kahoots use was instrumental in motivating them towards language acquisition due to the nature of immediate feedback received on their progress. Even though they have positive perceptions towards the use of Kahoot as a gamified tool, they have to overcome challenges because of factors. Due to the time constraints and technical issues, they must face some difficulties. To address these challenges, the participants provided implementations to make it more effective. It is significant to integrate Kahoot games into lessons because it is recognized as a productive way to capture students' attention. It is very supportive to provide adequate time to

engage in the activities. They highlighted that accessibility should be ensured. These implementations provided a proper background to make the learning and teaching context successful.

TABLE 1. Themes and Sub-themes resulting from the Thematic Analysis

Main Themes	Sub Themes
1. Enhanced engagement	Motivation Active participation
2.. Language Skill Development	Vocabulary and grammar development Immediate feedback
3. Challenges and limitations	Time pressure Technical issues
4. Suggestions for the implementation of Kahoot	Integrating Kahoot into lesson plans Providing adequate time Ensuring accessibility

#### VI CONCLUSION

This study examines the perceptions from the mindset of student-teachers as the teaching English as a second language undergraduates. They determine the effectiveness of the implementation of Kahoot games being a significant position in their learning process. Therefore, the data analysis of this study indicated students' positive perceptions towards formative assessments by addressing the first research question, while the second research question of this study explored the limitations that they have experienced in the use of Kahoot during their academics

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